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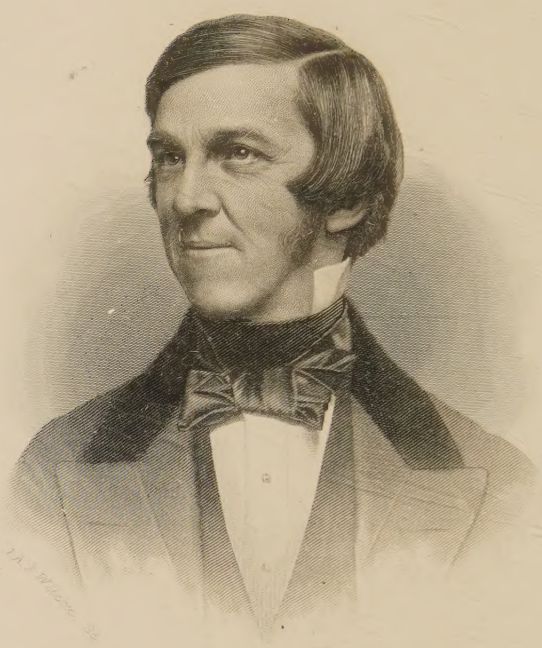

ÆT. 40

THE POETICAL WORKS

OF

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I.

EARLIER POEMS, SONGS IN MANY KEYS
POEMS OF THE CLASS OF '29, ETC.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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TO MY READERS

Nay, blame me not; I might have spared
Your patience many a trivial verse,
Yet these my earlier welcome shared,
So, let the better shield the worse.

And some might say, "Those ruder songs
Had freshness which the new have lost;
To spring the opening leaf belongs,
The chestnut-burs await the frost."

When those I wrote, my locks were brown,
When these I write — ah, well-a-day!
The autumn thistle's silvery down
Is not the purple bloom of May!

Go, little book, whose pages hold
Those garnered years in loving trust;
How long before your blue and gold
Shall fade and whiten in the dust?

O sexton of the alcoved tomb,
Where souls in leathern cerements lie,
Tell me each living poet's doom!
How long before his book shall die?

It matters little, soon or late,
A day, a month, a year, an age, —

I read oblivion in its date,
And Finis on its title-page.

Before we sighed, our griefs were told;
Before we smiled, our joys were sung;
And all our passions shaped of old
In accents lost to mortal tongue.

In vain a fresher mould we seek, —
Can all the varied phrases tell
That Babel's wandering children speak
How thrushes sing or lilacs smell?

Caged in the poet's lonely heart,
Love wastes unheard its tenderest tone;
The soul that sings must dwell apart,
Its inward melodies unknown.

Deal gently with us, ye who read!
Our largest hope is unfulfilled, —
The promise still outruns the deed, —
The tower, but not the spire, we build.

Our whitest pearl we never find;
Our ripest fruit we never reach;
The flowering moments of the mind
Drop half their petals in our speech.

These are my blossoms; if they wear
One streak of morn or evening's glow,
Accept them; but to me more fair
The buds of song that never blow.

April 8, 1862.

EARLIER POEMS

1830–1836

OLD IRONSIDES

This was the popular name by which the frigate Constitution was known. The poem was first printed in the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, at the time when it was proposed to break up the old ship as unfit for service. I subjoin the paragraph which led to the writing of the poem. It is from the *Advertiser* of Tuesday, September 14, 1830 : —

"*Old Ironsides.* — It has been affirmed upon good authority that the Secretary of the Navy has recommended to the Board of Navy Commissioners to dispose of the frigate Constitution. Since it has been understood that such a step was in contemplation we have heard but one opinion expressed, and that in decided disapprobation of the measure. Such a national object of interest, so endeared to our national pride as Old Ironsides is, should never by any act of our government cease to belong to the Navy, so long as our country is to be found upon the map of nations. In England it was lately determined by the Admiralty to cut the Victory, a one-hundred gun ship (which it will be recollected bore the flag of Lord Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar,) down to a seventy-four, but so loud were the lamentations of the people upon the proposed measure that the intention was abandoned. We confidently anticipate that the Secretary of the Navy will in like manner consult the general wish in regard to the Constitution, and either let her remain in ordinary or rebuild her whenever the public service may require." — *New York Journal of Commerce.*

The poem was an impromptu outburst of feeling and was published on the next day but one after reading the above paragraph.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
Long has it waved on high,
And many an eye has danced to see
That banner in the sky;
Beneath it rung the battle shout,
And burst the cannon's roar; —
The meteor of the ocean air
Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
Where knelt the vanquished foe,
When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
And waves were white below,
No more shall feel the victor's tread,
Or know the conquered knee; —
The harpies of the shore shall pluck
The eagle of the sea!

Oh better that her shattered hulk
Should sink beneath the wave;
Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
And there should be her grave;
Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale!

THE LAST LEAF

This poem was suggested by the appearance in one of our streets of a venerable relic of the Revolution, said to be one of the party who threw the tea overboard in Boston Harbor. He was a fine monumental specimen in his cocked hat and knee breeches, with his buckled shoes and his sturdy cane. The smile with which I, as a young man, greeted him, meant no disrespect to an honored fellow-citizen whose costume was out of date, but whose patriotism never changed with years. I do not recall any earlier example of this form of verse, which was commended by the fastidious Edgar Allan Poe, who made a copy of the whole poem which I have in his own handwriting. Good Abraham Lincoln had a great liking for the poem, and repeated it from memory to Governor Andrew, as the governor himself told me.

I SAW him once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago —
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,

Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

THE CAMBRIDGE CHURCHYARD

Our ancient church! its lowly tower,
Beneath the loftier spire,
Is shadowed when the sunset hour
Clothes the tall shaft in fire;
It sinks beyond the distant eye
Long ere the glittering vane,
High wheeling in the western sky,
Has faded o'er the plain.

Like Sentinel and Nun, they keep
Their vigil on the green;
One seems to guard, and one to weep,
The dead that lie between;
And both roll out, so full and near,
Their music's mingling waves,
They shake the grass, whose pennoned spear
Leans on the narrow graves.

The stranger parts the flaunting weeds,
Whose seeds the winds have strown
So thick, beneath the line he reads,
They shade the sculptured stone;
The child unveils his clustered brow,
And ponders for a while
The graven willow's pendent bough,
Or rudest cherub's smile.

But what to them the dirge, the knell?
These were the mourner's share, —
The sullen clang, whose heavy swell
Throbbed through the beating air;
The rattling cord, the rolling stone,
The shelving sand that slid,
And, far beneath, with hollow tone
Rung on the coffin's lid.

The slumberer's mound grows fresh and green,
Then slowly disappears;
The mosses creep, the gray stones lean,
Earth hides his date and years;
But, long before the once-loved name
Is sunk or worn away,
No lip the silent dust may claim,
That pressed the breathing clay.

Go where the ancient pathway guides,
See where our sires laid down
Their smiling babes, their cherished brides,
The patriarchs of the town;
Hast thou a tear for buried love?
A sigh for transient power?
All that a century left above,
Go, read it in an hour!

The Indian's shaft, the Briton's ball,
The sabre's thirsting edge,
The hot shell, shattering in its fall,
The bayonet's rending wedge, —

Here scattered death; yet, seek the spot,
No trace thine eye can see,
No altar, — and they need it not
Who leave their children free!

Look where the turbid rain-drops stand
In many a chiselled square;
The knightly crest, the shield, the brand
Of honored names were there; —
Alas! for every tear is dried
Those blazoned tablets knew,
Save when the icy marble's side
Drips with the evening dew.

Or gaze upon yon pillared stone,
The empty urn of pride;
There stand the Goblet and the Sun, —
What need of more beside?
Where lives the memory of the dead,
Who made their tomb a toy?
Whose ashes press that nameless bed?
Go, ask the village boy!

Lean o'er the slender western wall,
Ye ever-roaming girls;
The breath that bids the blossom fall
May lift your floating curls,
To sweep the simple lines that tell
An exile's date and doom;
And sigh, for where his daughters dwell,
They wreathe the stranger's tomb.

And one amid these shades was born,
Beneath this turf who lies,
Once beaming as the summer's morn,
That closed her gentle eyes;
If sinless angels love as we,
Who stood thy grave beside,
Three seraph welcomes waited thee,
The daughter, sister, bride!

I wandered to thy buried mound
When earth was hid below
The level of the glaring ground,
Choked to its gates with snow,
And when with summer's flowery waves
The lake of verdure rolled,
As if a Sultan's white-robed slaves
Had scattered pearls and gold.

Nay, the soft pinions of the air,
That lift this trembling tone,
Its breath of love may almost bear
To kiss thy funeral stone;
And, now thy smiles have passed away,
For all the joy they gave,
May sweetest dews and warmest ray
Lie on thine early grave!

When damps beneath and storms above
Have bowed these fragile towers,
Still o'er the graves yon locust grove
Shall swing its Orient flowers;

And I would ask no mouldering bust,
If e'er this humble line,
Which breathed a sigh o'er other's dust,
Might call a tear on mine.

TO AN INSECT

The Katydid is "a species of grasshopper found in the United States, so called from the sound which it makes." —*Worcester.*

I used to hear this insect in Providence, Rhode Island, but I do not remember hearing it in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I passed my boyhood. It is well known in other towns in the neighborhood of Boston.

I LOVE to hear thine earnest voice,
Wherever thou art hid,
Thou testy little dogmatist,
Thou pretty Katydid!
Thou mindest me of gentlefolks, —
Old gentlefolks are they, —
Thou say'st an undisputed thing
In such a solemn way.

Thou art a female, Katydid!
I know it by the trill
That quivers through thy piercing notes,
So petulant and shrill;
I think there is a knot of you
Beneath the hollow tree, —
A knot of spinster Katydids, —
Do Katydids drink tea?

Oh tell me where did Katy live,
And what did Katy do?

And was she very fair and young,
And yet so wicked, too?
Did Katy love a naughty man,
Or kiss more cheeks than one?
I warrant Katy did no more
Than many a Kate has done.

Dear me! I 'll tell you all about
My fuss with little Jane,
And Ann, with whom I used to walk
So often down the lane,
And all that tore their locks of black,
Or wet their eyes of blue, —
Pray tell me, sweetest Katydid,
What did poor Katy do?

Ah no! the living oak shall crash,
That stood for ages still,
The rock shall rend its mossy base
And thunder down the hill,
Before the little Katydid
Shall add one word, to tell
The mystic story of the maid
Whose name she knows so well.

Peace to the ever-murmuring race!
And when the latest one
Shall fold in death her feeble wings
Beneath the autumn sun,
Then shall she raise her fainting voice,
And lift her drooping lid,
And then the child of future years
Shall hear what Katy did.

THE DILEMMA

Now, by the blessed Paphian queen,
Who heaves the breast of sweet sixteen;
By every name I cut on bark
Before my morning star grew dark;
By Hymen's torch, by Cupid's dart,
By all that thrills the beating heart;
The bright black eye, the melting blue, —
I cannot choose between the two.

I had a vision in my dreams; —
I saw a row of twenty beams;
From every beam a rope was hung,
In every rope a lover swung;
I asked the hue of every eye
That bade each luckless lover die;
Ten shadowy lips said, heavenly blue,
And ten accused the darker hue.

I asked a matron which she deemed
With fairest light of beauty beamed;
She answered, some thought both were fair, —
Give her blue eyes and golden hair.
I might have liked her judgment well,
But, as she spoke, she rung the bell,
And all her girls, nor small nor few,
Came marching in, — their eyes were blue.

I asked a maiden; back she flung
The locks that round her forehead hung,

And turned her eye, a glorious one,
Bright as a diamond in the sun,
On me, until beneath its rays
I felt as if my hair would blaze;
She liked all eyes but eyes of green;
She looked at me; what could she mean?

Ah! many lids Love lurks between,
Nor heeds the coloring of his screen;
And when his random arrows fly,
The victim falls, but knows not why.
Gaze not upon his shield of jet,
The shaft upon the string is set;
Look not beneath his azure veil,
Though every limb were cased in mail.

Well, both might make a martyr break
The chain that bound him to the stake;
And both, with but a single ray,
Can melt our very hearts away;
And both, when balanced, hardly seem
To stir the scales, or rock the beam;
But that is dearest, all the while,
That wears for us the sweetest smile.

MY AUNT

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!
Long years have o'er her flown;
Yet still she strains the aching clasp
That binds her virgin zone;

I know it hurts her, — though she looks
As cheerful as she can ;
Her waist is ampler than her life,
For life is but a span.

My aunt ! my poor deluded aunt !
Her hair is almost gray ;
Why will she train that winter curl
In such a spring-like way ?
How can she lay her glasses down,
And say she reads as well,
When through a double convex lens
She just makes out to spell ?

Her father — grandpapa ! forgive
This erring lip its smiles —
Vowed she should make the finest girl
Within a hundred miles ;
He sent her to a stylish school ;
'T was in her thirteenth June ;
And with her, as the rules required,
" Two towels and a spoon."

They braced my aunt against a board,
To make her straight and tall ;
They laced her up, they starved her down,
To make her light and small ;
They pinched her feet, they singed her hair,
They screwed it up with pins ; —
Oh never mortal suffered more
In penance for her sins.

So, when my precious aunt was done,
My grandsire brought her back;
(By daylight, lest some rabid youth
Might follow on the track;)
"Ah!" said my grandsire, as he shook
Some powder in his pan,
"What could this lovely creature do
Against a desperate man!"

Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,
Nor bandit cavalcade,
Tore from the trembling father's arms
His all-accomplished maid.
For her how happy had it been!
And Heaven had spared to me
To see one sad, ungathered rose
On my ancestral tree.

REFLECTIONS OF A PROUD PEDESTRIAN

I saw the curl of his waving lash,
And the glance of his knowing eye,
And I knew that he thought he was cutting a dash,
As his steed went thundering by.

And he may ride in the rattling gig,
Or flourish the Stanhope gay,
And dream that he looks exceeding big
To the people that walk in the way;

But he shall think, when the night is still,
On the stable-boy's gathering numbers,

And the ghost of many a veteran bill
Shall hover around his slumbers;

The ghastly dun shall worry his sleep,
And constables cluster around him,
And he shall creep from the wood-hole deep
Where their spectre eyes have found him!

Ay! gather your reins, and crack your thong,
And bid your steed go faster;
He does not know, as he scrambles along,
That he has a fool for his master;

And hurry away on your lonely ride,
Nor deign from the mire to save me;
I will paddle it stoutly at your side
With the tandem that nature gave me!

DAILY TRIALS

BY A SENSITIVE MAN

Oh, there are times
When all this fret and tumult that we hear
Do seem more stale than to the sexton's ear
His own dull chimes.

Ding dong! ding dong!
The world is in a simmer like a sea
Over a pent volcano, — woe is me
All the day long!

From crib to shroud!
Nurse o'er our cradles screameth lullaby,
And friends in boots tramp round us as we die,
Snuffling aloud.

At morning's call
The small-voiced pug-dog welcomes in the sun,
And flea-bit mongrels, wakening one by one,
Give answer all.

When evening dim
Draws round us, then the lonely caterwaul,
Tart solo, sour duet, and general squall, —
These are our hymn.

Women, with tongues
Like polar needles, ever on the jar;
Men, plugless word-spouts, whose deep fountains are
Within their lungs.

Children, with drums
Strapped round them by the fond paternal ass;
Peripatetics with a blade of grass
Between their thumbs.

Vagrants, whose arts
Have caged some devil in their mad machine,
Which grinding, squeaks, with husky groans between,
Come out by starts.

Cockneys that kill
Thin horses of a Sunday, — men, with clams,

Hoarse as young bisons roaring for their dams
From hill to hill.

Soldiers, with guns,
Making a nuisance of the blessed air,
Child-crying bellmen, children in despair,
Screeching for buns.

Storms, thunders, waves!
Howl, crash, and bellow till ye get your fill;
Ye sometimes rest; men never can be still
But in their graves.

EVENING

BY A TAILOR

Day hath put on his jacket, and around
His burning bosom buttoned it with stars.
Here will I lay me on the velvet grass,
That is like padding to earth's meagre ribs,
And hold communion with the things about me.
Ah me! how lovely is the golden braid
That binds the skirt of night's descending robe!
The thin leaves, quivering on their silken threads,
Do make a music like to rustling satin,
As the light breezes smooth their downy nap.

Ha! what is this that rises to my touch,
So like a cushion? Can it be a cabbage?
It is, it is that deeply injured flower,
Which boys do flout us with; — but yet I love thee,

Thou giant rose, wrapped in a green surtout.
Doubtless in Eden thou didst blush as bright
As these, thy puny brethren; and thy breath
Sweetened the fragrance of her spicy air;
But now thou seemest like a bankrupt beau,
Stripped of his gaudy hues and essences,
And growing portly in his sober garments.

Is that a swan that rides upon the water?
Oh no, it is that other gentle bird,
Which is the patron of our noble calling.
I well remember, in my early years,
When these young hands first closed upon a goose;
I have a scar upon my thimble finger,
Which chronicles the hour of young ambition.
My father was a tailor, and his father,
And my sire's grandsire, all of them were tailors;
They had an ancient goose, — it was an heirloom
From some remoter tailor of our race.
It happened I did see it on a time
When none was near, and I did deal with it,
And it did burn me, — oh, most fearfully!

It is a joy to straighten out one's limbs,
And leap elastic from the level counter,
Leaving the petty grievances of earth,
The breaking thread, the din of clashing shears,
And all the needles that do wound the spirit,
For such a pensive hour of soothing silence.
Kind Nature, shuffling in her loose undress,
Lays bare her shady bosom; — I can feel
With all around me; — I can hail the flowers

That sprig earth's mantle, — and yon quiet bird,
That rides the stream, is to me as a brother.
The vulgar know not all the hidden pockets,
Where Nature stows away her loveliness.
But this unnatural posture of the legs
Cramps my extended calves, and I must go
Where I can coil them in their wonted fashion.

THE DORCHESTER GIANT

The "pudding-stone" is a remarkable conglomerate found very abundantly in the towns mentioned, all of which are in the neighborhood of Boston. We used in those primitive days to ask friends to *ride* with us when we meant to take them to *drive* with us.

THERE was a giant in time of old,
A mighty one was he;
He had a wife, but she was a scold,
So he kept her shut in his mammoth fold;
And he had children three.

It happened to be an election day,
And the giants were choosing a king;
The people were not democrats then,
They did not talk of the rights of men,
And all that sort of thing.

Then the giant took his children three,
And fastened them in the pen;
The children roared; quoth the giant, "Be still!"
And Dorchester Heights and Milton Hill
Rolled back the sound again.

Then he brought them a pudding stuffed with plums,
As big as the State-House dome;
Quoth he, "There 's something for you to eat;
So stop your mouths with your 'lection treat,
And wait till your dad comes home."

So the giant pulled him a chestnut stout,
And whittled the boughs away;
The boys and their mother set up a shout,
Said he, "You 're in, and you can't get out,
Bellow as loud as you may."

Off he went, and he growled a tune
As he strode the fields along;
'T is said a buffalo fainted away,
And fell as cold as a lump of clay,
When he heard the giant's song.

But whether the story 's true or not,
It is n't for me to show;
There 's many a thing that 's twice as queer
In somebody's lectures that we hear,
And those are true, you know.

. . . . . .

What are those lone ones doing now,
The wife and the children sad?
Oh, they are in a terrible rout,
Screaming, and throwing their pudding about,
Acting as they were mad.

They flung it over to Roxbury hills,
They flung it over the plain,

And all over Milton and Dorchester too
Great lumps of pudding the giants threw;
They tumbled as thick as rain.

. . . . . .

Giant and mammoth have passed away,
For ages have floated by;
The suet is hard as a marrow-bone,
And every plum is turned to a stone,
But there the puddings lie.

And if, some pleasant afternoon,
You 'll ask me out to ride,
The whole of the story I will tell,
And you shall see where the puddings fell,
And pay for the punch beside.

TO THE PORTRAIT OF "A LADY"

IN THE ATHENÆUM GALLERY

WELL, Miss, I wonder where you live,
I wonder what 's your name,
I wonder how you came to be
In such a stylish frame;
Perhaps you were a favorite child,
Perhaps an only one;
Perhaps your friends were not aware
You had your portrait done!

Yet you must be a harmless soul;
I cannot think that Sin
Would care to throw his loaded dice,
With such a stake to win;

I cannot think you would provoke
The poet's wicked pen,
Or make young women bite their lips,
Or ruin fine young men.

Pray, did you ever hear, my love,
Of boys that go about,
Who, for a very trifling sum,
Will snip one's picture out?
I'm not averse to red and white,
But all things have their place,
I think a profile cut in black
Would suit your style of face!

I love sweet features; I will own
That I should like myself
To see my portrait on a wall,
Or bust upon a shelf;
But nature sometimes makes one up
Of such sad odds and ends,
It really might be quite as well
Hushed up among one's friends!

THE COMET

The Comet! He is on his way,
And singing as he flies;
The whizzing planets shrink before
The spectre of the skies;
Ah! well may regal orbs burn blue,
And satellites turn pale,

Ten million cubic miles of head,
Ten billion leagues of tail!

On, on by whistling spheres of light
He flashes and he flames;
He turns not to the left nor right,
He asks them not their names;
One spurn from his demoniac heel, —
Away, away they fly,
Where darkness might be bottled up
And sold for "Tyrian dye."

And what would happen to the land,
And how would look the sea,
If in the bearded devil's path
Our earth should chance to be?
Full hot and high the sea would boil,
Full red the forests gleam;
Methought I saw and heard it all
In a dyspeptic dream!

I saw a tutor take his tube
The Comet's course to spy;
I heard a scream, — the gathered rays
Had stewed the tutor's eye;
I saw a fort, — the soldiers all
Were armed with goggles green;
Pop cracked the guns! whiz flew the balls!
Bang went the magazine!

I saw a poet dip a scroll
Each moment in a tub,

I read upon the warping back,
"The Dream of Beelzebub;"
He could not see his verses burn,
Although his brain was fried,
And ever and anon he bent
To wet them as they dried.

I saw the scalding pitch roll down
The crackling, sweating pines,
And streams of smoke, like water-spouts,
Burst through the rumbling mines;
I asked the firemen why they made
Such noise about the town;
They answered not, — but all the while
The brakes went up and down.

I saw a roasting pullet sit
Upon a baking egg;
I saw a cripple scorch his hand
Extinguishing his leg;
I saw nine geese upon the wing
Towards the frozen pole,
And every mother's gosling fell
Crisped to a crackling coal.

I saw the ox that browsed the grass
Writhe in the blistering rays,
The herbage in his shrinking jaws
Was all a fiery blaze;
I saw huge fishes, boiled to rags,
Bob through the bubbling brine;
And thoughts of supper crossed my soul;
I had been rash at mine.

Strange sights! strange sounds! Oh fearful dream!
Its memory haunts me still,
The steaming sea, the crimson glare,
That wreathed each wooded hill;
Stranger! if through thy reeling brain
Such midnight visions sweep,
Spare, spare, oh, spare thine evening meal,
And sweet shall be thy sleep!

THE MUSIC-GRINDERS

THERE are three ways in which men take
One's money from his purse,
And very hard it is to tell
Which of the three is worse;
But all of them are bad enough
To make a body curse.

You 're riding out some pleasant day,
And counting up your gains;
A fellow jumps from out a bush,
And takes your horse's reins,
Another hints some words about
A bullet in your brains.

It 's hard to meet such pressing friends
In such a lonely spot;
It 's very hard to lose your cash,
But harder to be shot;
And so you take your wallet out,
Though you would rather not.

Perhaps you 're going out to dine, —
Some odious creature begs
You 'll hear about the cannon-ball
That carried off his pegs,
And says it is a dreadful thing
For men to lose their legs.

He tells you of his starving wife,
His children to be fed,
Poor little, lovely innocents,
All clamorous for bread, —
And so you kindly help to put
A bachelor to bed.

You 're sitting on your window-seat,
Beneath a cloudless moon;
You hear a sound, that seems to wear
The semblance of a tune,
As if a broken fife should strive
To drown a cracked bassoon.

And nearer, nearer still, the tide
Of music seems to come,
There 's something like a human voice,
And something like a drum;
You sit in speechless agony,
Until your ear is numb.

Poor "home, sweet home" should seem to be
A very dismal place;
Your "auld acquaintance" all at once
Is altered in the face;

Their discords sting through Burns and Moore,
Like hedgehogs dressed in lace.

You think they are crusaders, sent
From some infernal clime,
To pluck the eyes of Sentiment,
And dock the tail of Rhyme,
To crack the voice of Melody,
And break the legs of Time.

But hark! the air again is still,
The music all is ground,
And silence, like a poultice, comes
To heal the blows of sound;
It cannot be, — it is, — it is, —
A hat is going round!

No! Pay the dentist when he leaves
A fracture in your jaw,
And pay the owner of the bear
That stunned you with his paw,
And buy the lobster that has had
Your knuckles in his claw;

But if you are a portly man,
Put on your fiercest frown,
And talk about a constable
To turn them out of town;
Then close your sentence with an oath,
And shut the window down!

And if you are a slender man,
Not big enough for that,

Or, if you cannot make a speech,
Because you are a flat,
Go very quietly and drop
A button in the hat!

THE TREADMILL SONG

The stars are rolling in the sky,
The earth rolls on below,
And we can feel the rattling wheel
Revolving as we go.
Then tread away, my gallant boys,
And make the axle fly;
Why should not wheels go round about,
Like planets in the sky?

Wake up, wake up, my duck-legged man,
And stir your solid pegs!
Arouse, arouse, my gawky friend,
And shake your spider legs;
What though you 're awkward at the trade,
There 's time enough to learn, —
So lean upon the rail, my lad,
And take another turn.

They 've built us up a noble wall,
To keep the vulgar out;
We 've nothing in the world to do
But just to walk about;
So faster, now, you middle men,
And try to beat the ends, —

It 's pleasant work to ramble round
Among one's honest friends.

Here, tread upon the long man's toes,
He sha'n't be lazy here, —
And punch the little fellow's ribs,
And tweak that lubber's ear, —
He 's lost them both, — don't pull his hair,
Because he wears a scratch,
But poke him in the further eye,
That is n't in the patch.

Hark! fellows, there 's the supper-bell,
And so our work is done;
It 's pretty sport, — suppose we take
A round or two for fun!
If ever they should turn me out,
When I have better grown,
Now hang me, but I mean to have
A treadmill of my own!

THE SEPTEMBER GALE

This tremendous hurricane occurred on the 23d of September, 1815. I remember it well, being then seven years old. A full account of it was published, I think, in the records of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Some of my recollections are given in *The Seasons*, an article to be found in a book of mine entitled *Pages from an Old Volume of Life.*

I 'M not a chicken; I have seen
Full many a chill September,

And though I was a youngster then,
That gale I well remember;
The day before, my kite-string snapped,
And I, my kite pursuing,
The wind whisked off my palm-leaf hat;
For me two storms were brewing!

It came as quarrels sometimes do,
When married folks get clashing;
There was a heavy sigh or two,
Before the fire was flashing, —
A little stir among the clouds,
Before they rent asunder, —
A little rocking of the trees,
And then came on the thunder.

Lord! how the ponds and rivers boiled!
They seemed like bursting craters!
And oaks lay scattered on the ground
As if they were p'taters;
And all above was in a howl,
And all below a clatter, —
The earth was like a frying-pan,
Or some such hissing matter.

It chanced to be our washing-day,
And all our things were drying;
The storm came roaring through the lines,
And set them all a flying;
I saw the shirts and petticoats
Go riding off like witches;

I lost, ah! bitterly I wept, —
I lost my Sunday breeches!

I saw them straddling through the air,
Alas! too late to win them;
I saw them chase the clouds, as if
The devil had been in them;
They were my darlings and my pride,
My boyhood's only riches, —
"Farewell, farewell," I faintly cried, —
"My breeches! Oh my breeches!"

That night I saw them in my dreams,
How changed from what I knew them!
The dews had steeped their faded threads,
The winds had whistled through them!
I saw the wide and ghastly rents
Where demon claws had torn them;
A hole was in their amplest part,
As if an imp had worn them.

I have had many happy years,
And tailors kind and clever,
But those young pantaloons have gone
Forever and forever!
And not till fate has cut the last
Of all my earthly stitches,
This aching heart shall cease to mourn
My loved, my long-lost breeches!

THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS

I WROTE some lines once on a time
In wondrous merry mood,
And thought, as usual, men would say
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer,
I laughed as I would die;
Albeit, in the general way,
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;
How kind it was of him
To mind a slender man like me,
He of the mighty limb.

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,
And, in my humorous way,
I added, (as a trifling jest,)
"There 'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,
And saw him peep within;
At the first line he read, his face
Was all upon the grin.

He read the next; the grin grew broad,
And shot from ear to ear;
He read the third; a chuckling noise
I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar;
The fifth; his waistband split;
The sixth; he burst five buttons off,
And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,
I watched that wretched man,
And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

THE LAST READER

I SOMETIMES sit beneath a tree
And read my own sweet songs;
Though naught they may to others be,
Each humble line prolongs
A tone that might have passed away
But for that scarce remembered lay.

I keep them like a lock or leaf
That some dear girl has given;
Frail record of an hour, as brief
As sunset clouds in heaven,
But spreading purple twilight still
High over memory's shadowed hill.

They lie upon my pathway bleak,
Those flowers that once ran wild,
As on a father's careworn cheek
The ringlets of his child;
The golden mingling with the gray,
And stealing half its snows away.

DOMINICAN COLLEGE
SAN RAFAEL
LIBRARY

What care I though the dust is spread
Around these yellow leaves,
Or o'er them his sarcastic thread
Oblivion's insect weaves?
Though weeds are tangled on the stream,
It still reflects my morning's beam.

And therefore love I such as smile
On these neglected songs,
Nor deem that flattery's needless wile
My opening bosom wrongs;
For who would trample, at my side,
A few pale buds, my garden's pride?

It may be that my scanty ore
Long years have washed away,
And where were golden sands before
Is naught but common clay;
Still something sparkles in the sun
For memory to look back upon.

And when my name no more is heard,
My lyre no more is known,
Still let me, like a winter's bird,
In silence and alone,
Fold over them the weary wing
Once flashing through the dews of spring.

Yes, let my fancy fondly wrap
My youth in its decline,
And riot in the rosy lap
Of thoughts that once were mine,

And give the worm my little store
When the last reader reads no more!

POETRY:

A METRICAL ESSAY, READ BEFORE THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, AUGUST, 1836

TO CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM, THE FOLLOWING METRICAL ESSAY IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

This Academic Poem presents the simple and partial views of a young person trained after the schools of classical English verse as represented by Pope, Goldsmith, and Campbell, with whose lines his memory was early stocked. It will be observed that it deals chiefly with the constructive side of the poet's function. That which makes him a poet is not the power of writing melodious rhymes, it is not the possession of ordinary human sensibilities nor even of both these qualities in connection with each other. I should rather say, if I were now called upon to define it, it is the power of transfiguring the experiences and shows of life into an aspect which comes from his imagination and kindles that of others. Emotion is its stimulus and language furnishes its expression; but these are not all, as some might infer was the doctrine of the poem before the reader.

A common mistake made by young persons who suppose themselves to have the poetical gift is that their own spiritual exaltation finds a true expression in the conventional phrases which are borrowed from the voices of the singers whose inspiration they think they share.

Looking at this poem as an expression of some aspects of the *ars poetica*, with some passages which I can read even at this mature period of life without blushing for them, it may stand as the most serious representation of my early efforts. Intended as it was for public delivery, many of its paragraphs may betray the fact by their somewhat rhetorical and sonorous character.

Scenes of my youth! awake its slumbering fire!
Ye winds of Memory, sweep the silent lyre!

Ray of the past, if yet thou canst appear,
Break through the clouds of Fancy's waning year;
Chase from her breast the thin autumnal snow,
If leaf or blossom still is fresh below!

Long have I wandered; the returning tide
Brought back an exile to his cradle's side;
And as my bark her time-worn flag unrolled,
To greet the land-breeze with its faded fold,
So, in remembrance of my boyhood's time,
I lift these ensigns of neglected rhyme;
Oh, more than blest, that, all my wanderings through,
My anchor falls where first my pennons flew!

The morning light, which rains its quivering beams
Wide o'er the plains, the summits, and the streams,
In one broad blaze expands its golden glow
On all that answers to its glance below;
Yet, changed on earth, each far reflected ray
Braids with fresh hues the shining brow of day;
Now, clothed in blushes by the painted flowers,
Tracks on their cheeks the rosy-fingered hours;
Now, lost in shades, whose dark entangled leaves
Drip at the noontide from their pendent eaves,
Fades into gloom, or gleams in light again
From every dew-drop on the jewelled plain.

We, like the leaf, the summit, or the wave,
Reflect the light our common nature gave,

But every sunbeam, falling from her throne,
Wears on our hearts some coloring of our own:
Chilled in the slave, and burning in the free,
Like the sealed cavern by the sparkling sea;
Lost, like the lightning in the sullen clod,
Or shedding radiance, like the smiles of God;
Pure, pale in Virtue, as the star above,
Or quivering roseate on the leaves of Love;
Glaring like noontide, where it glows upon
Ambition's sands, — the desert in the sun, —
Or soft suffusing o'er the varied scene
Life's common coloring, — intellectual green.

Thus Heaven, repeating its material plan,
Arched over all the rainbow mind of man;
But he who, blind to universal laws,
Sees but effects, unconscious of their cause,—
Believes each image in itself is bright,
Not robed in drapery of reflected light, —
Is like the rustic who, amidst his toil,
Has found some crystal in his meagre soil,
And, lost in rapture, thinks for him alone
Earth worked her wonders on the sparkling stone,
Nor dreams that Nature, with as nice a line,
Carved countless angles through the boundless mine.

Thus err the many, who, entranced to find
Unwonted lustre in some clearer mind,
Believe that Genius sets the laws at naught
Which chain the pinions of our wildest thought;
Untaught to measure, with the eye of art,

The wandering fancy or the wayward heart;
Who match the little only with the less,
And gaze in rapture at its slight excess,
Proud of a pebble, as the brightest gem
Whose light might crown an emperor's diadem.

And, most of all, the pure ethereal fire
Which seems to radiate from the poet's lyre
Is to the world a mystery and a charm,
An Ægis wielded on a mortal's arm,
While Reason turns her dazzled eye away,
And bows her sceptre to her subject's sway;
And thus the poet, clothed with godlike state,
Usurped his Maker's title — to create;
He, whose thoughts differing not in shape, but dress,
What others feel more fitly can express,
Sits like the maniac on his fancied throne,
Peeps through the bars, and calls the world his own.

There breathes no being but has some pretence
To that fine instinct called poetic sense:
The rudest savage, roaming through the wild;
The simplest rustic, bending o'er his child;
The infant, listening to the warbling bird;
The mother, smiling at its half-formed word;
The boy uncaged, who tracks the fields at large;
The girl, turned matron to her babe-like charge;
The freeman, casting with unpurchased hand
The vote that shakes the turret of the land;
The slave, who, slumbering on his rusted chain,
Dreams of the palm-trees on his burning plain;
The hot-cheeked reveller, tossing down the wine,

To join the chorus pealing "Auld lang syne";
The gentle maid, whose azure eye grows dim,
While Heaven is listening to her evening hymn;
The jewelled beauty, when her steps draw near
The circling dance and dazzling chandelier;
E'en trembling age, when Spring's renewing air
Waves the thin ringlets of his silvered hair;—
All, all are glowing with the inward flame,
Whose wider halo wreathes the poet's name,
While, unembalmed, the silent dreamer dies,
His memory passing with his smiles and sighs!

If glorious visions, born for all mankind,
The bright aurcras of our twilight mind;
If fancies, varying as the shapes that lie
Stained on the windows of the sunset sky;
If hopes, that beckon with delusive gleams,
Till the eye dances in the void of dreams;
If passions, following with the winds that urge
Earth's wildest wanderer to her farthest verge;—
If these on all some transient hours bestow
Of rapture tingling with its hectic glow,
Then all are poets; and if earth had rolled
Her myriad centuries, and her doom were told,
Each moaning billow of her shoreless wave
Would wail its requiem o'er a poet's grave!

If to embody in a breathing word
Tones that the spirit trembled when it heard;
To fix the image all unveiled and warm,
And carve in language its ethereal form,
So pure, so perfect, that the lines express

No meagre shrinking, no unlaced excess;
To feel that art, in living truth, has taught
Ourselves, reflected in the sculptured thought; —
If this alone bestow the right to claim
The deathless garland and the sacred name,
Then none are poets save the saints on high,
Whose harps can murmur all that words deny!

But though to none is granted to reveal
In perfect semblance all that each may feel,
As withered flowers recall forgotten love,
So, warmed to life, our faded passions move
In every line, where kindling fancy throws
The gleam of pleasures or the shade of woes.

When, schooled by time, the stately queen of art
Had smoothed the pathways leading to the heart,
Assumed her measured tread, her solemn tone,
And round her courts the clouds of fable thrown,
The wreaths of heaven descended on her shrine,
And wondering earth proclaimed the Muse divine.
Yet if her votaries had but dared profane
The mystic symbols of her sacred reign,
How had they smiled beneath the veil to find
What slender threads can chain the mighty mind!

Poets, like painters, their machinery claim,
And verse bestows the varnish and the frame;
Our grating English, whose Teutonic jar
Shakes the racked axle of Art's rattling car,
Fits like mosaic in the lines that gird
Fast in its place each many-angled word;

From Saxon lips Anacreon's numbers glide,
As once they melted on the Teian tide,
And, fresh transfused, the Iliad thrills again
From Albion's cliffs as o'er Achaia's plain!
The proud heroic, with its pulse-like beat,
Rings like the cymbals clashing as they meet;
The sweet Spenserian, gathering as it flows,
Sweeps gently onward to its dying close,
Where waves on waves in long succession pour,
Till the ninth billow melts along the shore;
The lonely spirit of the mournful lay,
Which lives immortal as the verse of Gray,
In sable plumage slowly drifts along,
On eagle pinion, through the air of song;
The glittering lyric bounds elastic by,
With flashing ringlets and exulting eye,
While every image, in her airy whirl,
Gleams like a diamond on a dancing girl!

Born with mankind, with man's expanded range
And varying fates the poet's numbers change;
Thus in his history may we hope to find
Some clearer epochs of the poet's mind,
As from the cradle of its birth we trace,
Slow wandering forth, the patriarchal race.

I.

When the green earth, beneath the zephyr's wing,
Wears on her breast the varnished buds of Spring;
When the loosed current, as its folds uncoil,

Slides in the channels of the mellowed soil;
When the young hyacinth returns to seek
The air and sunshine with her emerald beak;
When the light snowdrops, starting from their cells,
Hang each pagoda with its silver bells;
When the frail willow twines her trailing bow
With pallid leaves that sweep the soil below;
When the broad elm, sole empress of the plain,
Whose circling shadow speaks a century's reign,
Wreathes in the clouds her regal diadem, —
A forest waving on a single stem; —
Then mark the poet; though to him unknown
The quaint-mouthed titles, such as scholars own,
See how his eye in ecstasy pursues
The steps of Nature tracked in radiant hues;
Nay, in thyself, whate'er may be thy fate,
Pallid with toil or surfeited with state,
Mark how thy fancies, with the vernal rose,
Awake, all sweetness, from their long repose;
Then turn to ponder o'er the classic page,
Traced with the idyls of a greener age,
And learn the instinct which arose to warm
Art's earliest essay and her simplest form.

To themes like these her narrow path confined
The first-born impulse moving in the mind;
In vales unshaken by the trumpet's sound,
Where peaceful Labor tills his fertile ground,
The silent changes of the rolling years,
Marked on the soil or dialled on the spheres,
The crested forests and the colored flowers,
The dewy grottos and the blushing bowers, —

These, and their guardians, who, with liquid names,
Strephons and Chloes, melt in mutual flames,
Woo the young Muses from their mountain shade,
To make Arcadias in the lonely glade.

Nor think they visit only with their smiles
The fabled valleys and Elysian isles;
He who is wearied of his village plain
May roam the Edens of the world in vain.
'T is not the star-crowned cliff, the cataract's flow,
The softer foliage or the greener glow,
The lake of sapphire or the spar-hung cave,
The brighter sunset or the broader wave,
Can warm his heart whom every wind has blown
To every shore, forgetful of his own.

Home of our childhood! how affection clings
And hovers round thee with her seraph wings!
Dearer thy hills, though clad in autumn brown,
Than fairest summits which the cedars crown!
Sweeter the fragrance of thy summer breeze
Than all Arabia breathes along the seas!
The stranger's gale wafts home the exile's sigh,
For the heart's temple is its own blue sky!

Oh happiest they, whose early love unchanged,
Hopes undissolved, and friendship unestranged,
Tired of their wanderings, still can deign to see
Love, hopes, and friendship, centring all in thee!

And thou, my village! as again I tread
Amidst thy living and above thy dead;

Though some fair playmates guard with chaster fears
Their cheeks, grown holy with the lapse of years;
Though with the dust some reverend locks may blend,
Where life's last mile-stone marks the journey's end;
On every bud the changing year recalls,
The brightening glance of morning memory falls,
Still following onward as the months unclose
The balmy lilac or the bridal rose;
And still shall follow, till they sink once more
Beneath the snow-drifts of the frozen shore,
As when my bark, long tossing in the gale,
Furled in her port her tempest-rended sail!

What shall I give thee? Can a simple lay,
Flung on thy bosom like a girl's bouquet,
Do more than deck thee for an idle hour,
Then fall unheeded, fading like the flower?
Yet, when I trod, with footsteps wild and free,
The crackling leaves beneath yon linden-tree,
Panting from play or dripping from the stream,
How bright the visions of my boyish dream!
Or, modest Charles, along thy broken edge,
Black with soft ooze and fringed with arrowy sedge,
As once I wandered in the morning sun,
With reeking sandal and superfluous gun,
How oft, as Fancy whispered in the gale,
Thou wast the Avon of her flattering tale!
Ye hills, whose foliage, fretted on the skies,

Prints shadowy arches on their evening dyes,
How should my song with holiest charm invest
Each dark ravine and forest-lifting crest!
How clothe in beauty each familiar scene,
Till all was classic on my native green!

As the drained fountain, filled with autumn leaves,
The field swept naked of its garnered sheaves,
So wastes at noon the promise of our dawn,
The springs all choking, and the harvest gone.

Yet hear the lay of one whose natal star
Still seemed the brightest when it shone afar;
Whose cheek, grown pallid with ungracious toil,
Glows in the welcome of his parent soil;
And ask no garlands sought beyond the tide,
But take the leaflets gathered at your side.

II.

But times were changed; the torch of terror came,
To light the summits with the beacon's flame;
The streams ran crimson, the tall mountain pines
Rose a new forest o'er embattled lines;
The bloodless sickle lent the warrior's steel,
The harvest bowed beneath his chariot wheel;
Where late the wood-dove sheltered her repose
The raven waited for the conflict's close;
The cuirassed sentry walked his sleepless round

Where Daphne smiled or Amaryllis frowned ;
Where timid minstrels sung their blushing charms,
Some wild Tyrtæus called aloud, " To arms ! "

When Glory wakes, when fiery spirits leap,
Roused by her accents from their tranquil sleep,
The ray that flashes from the soldier's crest
Lights, as it glances, in the poet's breast ; —
Not in pale dreamers, whose fantastic lay
Toys with smooth trifles like a child at play,
But men, who act the passions they inspire,
Who wave the sabre as they sweep the lyre !

Ye mild enthusiasts, whose pacific frowns
Are lost like dew-drops caught in burning towns,
Pluck as ye will the radiant plumes of fame,
Break Cæsar's bust to make yourselves a name ;
But if your country bares the avenger's blade
For wrongs unpunished or for debts unpaid,
When the roused nation bids her armies form,
And screams her eagle through the gathering storm,
When from your ports the bannered frigate rides,
Her black bows scowling to the crested tides,
Your hour has past ; in vain your feeble cry
As the babe's wailings to the thundering sky !

Scourge of mankind ! with all the dread array
That wraps in wrath thy desolating way,
As the wild tempest wakes the slumbering sea,
Thou only teachest all that man can be.
Alike thy tocsin has the power to charm

The toil-knit sinews of the rustic's arm,
Or swell the pulses in the poet's veins,
And bid the nations tremble at his strains.

The city slept beneath the moonbeam's glance,
Her white walls gleaming through the vines of France,
And all was hushed, save where the footsteps fell,
On some high tower, of midnight sentinel.
But one still watched ; no self-encircled woes
Chased from his lids the angel of repose ;
He watched, he wept, for thoughts of bitter years
Bowed his dark lashes, wet with burning tears :
His country's sufferings and her children's shame
Streamed o'er his memory like a forest's flame ;
Each treasured insult, each remembered wrong,
Rolled through his heart and kindled into song.
His taper faded ; and the morning gales
Swept through the world the war-song of Marseilles !

Now, while around the smiles of Peace expand,
And Plenty's wreaths festoon the laughing land ;
While France ships outward her reluctant ore,
And half our navy basks upon the shore ;
From ruder themes our meek-eyed Muses turn
To crown with roses their enamelled urn.

If e'er again return those awful days
Whose clouds were crimsoned with the beacon's blaze,
Whose grass was trampled by the soldier's heel,

Whose tides were reddened round the rushing keel,
God grant some lyre may wake a nobler strain
To rend the silence of our tented plain!
When Gallia's flag its triple fold displays,
Her marshalled legions peal the Marseillaise;
When round the German close the war-clouds dim,
Far through their shadows floats his battle-hymn;
When, crowned with joy, the camps of England ring,
A thousand voices shout, "God save the King!"
When victory follows with our eagle's glance,
Our nation's anthem pipes a country dance!

Some prouder Muse, when comes the hour at last,
May shake our hillsides with her bugle-blast;
Not ours the task: but since the lyric dress
Relieves the statelier with its sprightliness,
Hear an old song, which some, perchance, have seen
In stale gazette or cobwebbed magazine.
There was an hour when patriots dared profane
The mast that Britain strove to bow in vain;
And one, who listened to the tale of shame,
Whose heart still answered to that sacred name,
Whose eye still followed o'er his country's tides
Thy glorious flag, our brave Old Ironsides!
From yon lone attic, on a smiling morn,
Thus mocked the spoilers with his school-boy scorn.

III.

When florid Peace resumed her golden reign,
And arts revived, and valleys bloomed again,
While War still panted on his broken blade,
Once more the Muse her heavenly wing essayed.
Rude was the song: some ballad, stern and wild,
Lulled the light slumbers of the soldier's child;
Or young romancer, with his threatening glance
And fearful fables of his bloodless lance,
Scared the soft fancy of the clinging girls,
Whose snowy fingers smoothed his raven curls.
But when long years the stately form had bent,
And faithless Memory her illusions lent,
So vast the outlines of Tradition grew
That History wondered at the shapes she drew,
And veiled at length their too ambitious hues
Beneath the pinions of the Epic Muse.

Far swept her wing; for stormier days had brought
With darker passions deeper tides of thought.
The camp's harsh tumult and the conflict's glow,
The thrill of triumph and the gasp of woe,
The tender parting and the glad return,
The festal banquet and the funeral urn,
And all the drama which at once uprears
Its spectral shadows through the clash of spears,
From camp and field to echoing verse transferred,
Swelled the proud song that listening nations heard.

Why floats the amaranth in eternal bloom
O'er Ilium's turrets and Achilles' tomb?
Why lingers fancy where the sunbeams smile
On Circe's gardens and Calypso's isle?
Why follows memory to the gate of Troy
Her plumed defender and his trembling boy?
Lo! the blind dreamer, kneeling on the sand
To trace these records with his doubtful hand;
In fabled tones his own emotion flows,
And other lips repeat his silent woes;
In Hector's infant see the babes that shun
Those deathlike eyes, unconscious of the sun,
Or in his hero hear himself implore,
"Give me to see, and Ajax asks no more!"

Thus live undying through the lapse of time
The solemn legends of the warrior's clime;
Like Egypt's pyramid or Pæstum's fane,
They stand the heralds of the voiceless plain.
Yet not like them, for Time, by slow degrees,
Saps the gray stone and wears the embroidered frieze,
And Isis sleeps beneath her subject Nile,
And crumbled Neptune strews his Dorian pile;
But Art's fair fabric, strengthening as it rears
Its laurelled columns through the mist of years,
As the blue arches of the bending skies
Still gird the torrent, following as it flies,
Spreads, with the surges bearing on mankind,
Its starred pavilion o'er the tides of mind!

In vain the patriot asks some lofty lay
To dress in state our wars of yesterday.

The classic days, those mothers of romance,
That roused a nation for a woman's glance;
The age of mystery, with its hoarded power,
That girt the tyrant in his storied tower,
Have passed and faded like a dream of youth,
And riper eras ask for history's truth.

On other shores, above their mouldering towns,
In sullen pomp the tall cathedral frowns,
Pride in its aisles and paupers at the door,
Which feeds the beggars whom it fleeced of yore.
Simple and frail, our lowly temples throw
Their slender shadows on the paths below;
Scarce steal the winds, that sweep his woodland tracks,
The larch's perfume from the settler's axe,
Ere, like a vision of the morning air,
His slight-framed steeple marks the house of prayer;
Its planks all reeking and its paint undried,
Its rafters sprouting on the shady side,
It sheds the raindrops from its shingled eaves
Ere its green brothers once have changed their leaves.

Yet Faith's pure hymn, beneath its shelter rude,
Breathes out as sweetly to the tangled wood
As where the rays through pictured glories pour
On marble shaft and tessellated floor; —
Heaven asks no surplice round the heart that feels,
And all is holy where devotion kneels.

Thus on the soil the patriot's knee should bend
Which holds the dust once living to defend;
Where'er the hireling shrinks before the free,
Each pass becomes "a new Thermopylæ"!
Where'er the battles of the brave are won,
There every mountain "looks on Marathon"!

Our fathers live; they guard in glory still
The grass-grown bastions of the fortressed hill;
Still ring the echoes of the trampled gorge,
With *God and Freedom! England and Saint George!*
The royal cipher on the captured gun
Mocks the sharp night-dews and the blistering sun;
The red-cross banner shades its captor's bust,
Its folds still loaded with the conflict's dust;
The drum, suspended by its tattered marge,
Once rolled and rattled to the Hessian's charge;
The stars have floated from Britannia's mast,
The redcoat's trumpets blown the rebel's blast.

Point to the summits where the brave have bled,
Where every village claims its glorious dead;
Say, when their bosoms met the bayonet's shock,
Their only corselet was the rustic frock;
Say, when they mustered to the gathering horn,
The titled chieftain curled his lip in scorn,
Yet, when their leader bade his lines advance,
No musket wavered in the lion's glance;
Say, when they fainted in the forced retreat,

They tracked the snow-drifts with their bleeding
feet,
Yet still their banners, tossing in the blast,
Bore *Ever Ready*, faithful to the last,
Through storm and battle, till they waved again
On Yorktown's hills and Saratoga's plain!

Then, if so fierce the insatiate patriot's flame,
Truth looks too pale and history seems too tame,
Bid him await some new Columbiad's page,
To gild the tablets of an iron age,
And save his tears, which yet may fall upon
Some fabled field, some fancied Washington!

IV.

But once again, from their Æolian cave,
The winds of Genius wandered on the wave.
Tired of the scenes the timid pencil drew,
Sick of the notes the sounding clarion blew,
Sated with heroes who had worn so long
The shadowy plumage of historic song,
The new-born poet left the beaten course,
To track the passions to their living source.

Then rose the Drama; — and the world admired
Her varied page with deeper thought inspired:
Bound to no clime, for Passion's throb is one
In Greenland's twilight or in India's sun;
Born for no age, for all the thoughts that roll
In the dark vortex of the stormy soul,

Unchained in song, no freezing years can tame;
God gave them birth, and man is still the same.

So full on life her magic mirror shone,
Her sister Arts paid tribute to her throne;
One reared her temple, one her canvas warmed,
And Music thrilled, while Eloquence informed.
The weary rustic left his stinted task
For smiles and tears, the dagger and the mask;
The sage, turned scholar, half forgot his lore,
To be the woman he despised before.
O'er sense and thought she threw her golden chain,
And Time, the anarch, spares her deathless reign.

Thus lives Medea, in our tamer age,
As when her buskin pressed the Grecian stage;
Not in the cells where frigid learning delves
In Aldine folios mouldering on their shelves,
But breathing, burning in the glittering throng,
Whose thousand bravoes roll untired along,
Circling and spreading through the gilded halls,
From London's galleries to San Carlo's walls!

Thus shall he live whose more than mortal name
Mocks with its ray the pallid torch of Fame;
So proudly lifted that it seems afar
No earthly Pharos, but a heavenly star,
Who, unconfined to Art's diurnal bound,
Girds her whole zodiac in his flaming round,
And leads the passions, like the orb that guides,
From pole to pole, the palpitating tides!

V.

Though round the Muse the robe of song is thrown,
Think not the poet lives in verse alone.
Long ere the chisel of the sculptor taught
The lifeless stone to mock the living thought;
Long ere the painter bade the canvas glow
With every line the forms of beauty know;
Long ere the iris of the Muses threw
On every leaf its own celestial hue,
In fable's dress the breath of genius poured,
And warmed the shapes that later times adored.

Untaught by Science how to forge the keys
That loose the gates of Nature's mysteries;
Unschooled by Faith, who, with her angel tread,
Leads through the labyrinth with a single thread,
His fancy, hovering round her guarded tower,
Rained through its bars like Danae's golden shower.

He spoke; the sea-nymph answered from her cave:
He called; the naiad left her mountain wave:
He dreamed of beauty; lo, amidst his dream,
Narcissus, mirrored in the breathless stream;
And night's chaste empress, in her bridal play,
Laughed through the foliage where Endymion lay;
And ocean dimpled, as the languid swell
Kissed the red lip of Cytherea's shell:

Of power, — Bellona swept the crimson field,
And blue-eyed Pallas shook her Gorgon shield;
O'er the hushed waves their mightier monarch drove,
And Ida trembled to the tread of Jove!

So every grace that plastic language knows
To nameless poets its perfection owes.
The rough-hewn words to simplest thoughts confined
Were cut and polished in their nicer mind;
Caught on their edge, imagination's ray
Splits into rainbows, shooting far away; —
From sense to soul, from soul to sense, it flies,
And through all nature links analogies;
He who reads right will rarely look upon
A better poet than his lexicon!

There is a race which cold, ungenial skies
Breed from decay, as fungous growths arise;
Though dying fast, yet springing fast again,
Which still usurps an unsubstantial reign,
With frames too languid for the charms of sense,
And minds worn down with action too intense;
Tired of a world whose joys they never knew,
Themselves deceived, yet thinking all untrue;
Scarce men without, and less than girls within,
Sick of their life before its cares begin; —
The dull disease, which drains their feeble hearts,
To life's decay some hectic thrills imparts,
And lends a force which, like the maniac's power,
Pays with blank years the frenzy of an hour.

And this is Genius! Say, does Heaven degrade
The manly frame, for health, for action made?
Break down the sinews, rack the brow with pains,
Blanch the right cheek and drain the purple veins,
To clothe the mind with more extended sway,
Thus faintly struggling in degenerate clay?

No! gentle maid, too ready to admire,
Though false its notes, the pale enthusiast's lyre;
If this be genius, though its bitter springs
Glowed like the morn beneath Aurora's wings,
Seek not the source whose sullen bosom feeds
But fruitless flowers and dark, envenomed weeds.

But, if so bright the dear illusion seems,
Thou wouldst be partner of thy poet's dreams,
And hang in rapture on his bloodless charms,
Or die, like Raphael, in his angel arms,
Go and enjoy thy blessed lot, — to share
In Cowper's gloom or Chatterton's despair!

Not such were they whom, wandering o'er the waves,
I looked to meet, but only found their graves;
If friendship's smile, the better part of fame,
Should lend my song the only wreath I claim,
Whose voice would greet me with a sweeter tone,
Whose living hand more kindly press my own,
Than theirs, — could Memory, as her silent tread
Prints the pale flowers that blossom o'er the dead,
Those breathless lips, now closed in peace, restore,
Or wake those pulses hushed to beat no more?

Thou calm, chaste scholar! I can see thee now,
The first young laurels on thy pallid brow,
O'er thy slight figure floating lightly down
In graceful folds the academic gown,
On thy curled lip the classic lines that taught
How nice the mind that sculptured them with thought,
And triumph glistening in the clear blue eye,
Too bright to live, — but oh, too fair to die!

And thou, dear friend, whom Science still deplores,
And Love still mourns, on ocean-severed shores,
Though the bleak forest twice has bowed with snow
Since thou wast laid its budding leaves below,
Thine image mingles with my closing strain,
As when we wandered by the turbid Seine,
Both blessed with hopes, which revelled, bright and free,
On all we longed or all we dreamed to be;
To thee the amaranth and the cypress fell, —
And I was spared to breathe this last farewell!

But lived there one in unremembered days,
Or lives there still, who spurns the poet's bays,
Whose fingers, dewy from Castalia's springs,
Rest on the lyre, yet scorn to touch the strings?
Who shakes the senate with the silver tone
The groves of Pindus might have sighed to own?
Have such e'er been? Remember Canning's name!
Do such still live? Let "Alaric's Dirge" proclaim!

Immortal Art! where'er the rounded sky
Bends o'er the cradle where thy children lie,
Their home is earth, their herald every tongue
Whose accents echo to the voice that sung.
One leap of Ocean scatters on the sand
The quarried bulwarks of the loosening land;
One thrill of earth dissolves a century's toil
Strewed like the leaves that vanish in the soil;
One hill o'erflows, and cities sink below,
Their marbles splintering in the lava's glow;
But one sweet tone, scarce whispered to the air,
From shore to shore the blasts of ages bear;
One humble name, which oft, perchance, has borne
The tyrant's mockery and the courtier's scorn,
Towers o'er the dust of earth's forgotten graves,
As once, emerging through the waste of waves,
The rocky Titan, round whose shattered spear
Coiled the last whirlpool of the drowning sphere!

ADDITIONAL POEMS

1837–1848

THE PILGRIM'S VISION

In the hour of twilight shadows
The Pilgrim sire looked out;
He thought of the "bloudy Salvages"
That lurked all round about,
Of Wituwamet's pictured knife
And Pecksuot's whooping shout;
For the baby's limbs were feeble,
Though his father's arms were stout.

His home was a freezing cabin,
Too bare for the hungry rat;
Its roof was thatched with ragged grass,
And bald enough of that;
The hole that served for casement
Was glazed with an ancient hat,
And the ice was gently thawing
From the log whereon he sat.

Along the dreary landscape
His eyes went to and fro,

The trees all clad in icicles,
The streams that did not flow;
A sudden thought flashed o'er him, —
A dream of long ago, —
He smote his leathern jerkin,
And murmured, "Even so!"

"Come hither, God-be-Glorified,
And sit upon my knee;
Behold the dream unfolding,
Whereof I spake to thee
By the winter's hearth in Leyden
And on the stormy sea.
True is the dream's beginning, —
So may its ending be!

"I saw in the naked forest
Our scattered remnant cast,
A screen of shivering branches
Between them and the blast;
The snow was falling round them,
The dying fell as fast;
I looked to see them perish,
When lo, the vision passed.

"Again mine eyes were opened; —
The feeble had waxed strong,
The babes had grown to sturdy men,
The remnant was a throng;
By shadowed lake and winding stream,
And all the shores along,
The howling demons quaked to hear
The Christian's godly song.

"They slept, the village fathers,
By river, lake, and shore,
When far adown the steep of Time
The vision rose once more:
I saw along the winter snow
A spectral column pour,
And high above their broken ranks
A tattered flag they bore.

"Their Leader rode before them,
Of bearing calm and high,
The light of Heaven's own kindling
Throned in his awful eye;
These were a Nation's champions
Her dread appeal to try.
God for the right! I faltered,
And lo, the train passed by.

"Once more; — the strife is ended,
The solemn issue tried,
The Lord of Hosts, his mighty arm
Has helped our Israel's side;
Gray stone and grassy hillock
Tell where our martyrs died,
But peaceful smiles the harvest,
And stainless flows the tide.

"A crash, as when some swollen cloud
Cracks o'er the tangled trees!
With side to side, and spar to spar,
Whose smoking decks are these?
I know Saint George's blood-red cross,
Thou Mistress of the Seas,-

But what is she whose streaming bars
Roll out before the breeze?

"Ah, well her iron ribs are knit,
Whose thunders strive to quell
The bellowing throats, the blazing lips,
That pealed the Armada's knell!
The mist was cleared, — a wreath of stars
Rose o'er the crimsoned swell,
And, wavering from its haughty peak,
The cross of England fell!

"O trembling Faith! though dark the morn,
A heavenly torch is thine;
While feebler races melt away,
And paler orbs decline,
Still shall the fiery pillar's ray
Along thy pathway shine,
To light the chosen tribe that sought
This Western Palestine!

"I see the living tide roll on;
It crowns with flaming towers
The icy capes of Labrador,
The Spaniard's 'land of flowers'!
It streams beyond the splintered ridge
That parts the northern showers;
From eastern rock to sunset wave
The Continent is ours!"

He ceased, the grim old soldier-saint,
Then softly bent to cheer

The Pilgrim-child, whose wasting face
  Was meekly turned to hear;
And drew his toil-worn sleeve across
  To brush the manly tear
From cheeks that never changed in woe,
  And never blanched in fear.

The weary Pilgrim slumbers,
  His resting-place unknown;
His hands were crossed, his lips were closed,
  The dust was o'er him strown;
The drifting soil, the mouldering leaf,
  Along the sod were blown;
His mound has melted into earth,
  His memory lives alone.

So let it live unfading,
  The memory of the dead,
Long as the pale anemone
  Springs where their tears were shed,
Or, raining in the summer's wind
  In flakes of burning red,
The wild rose sprinkles with its leaves
  The turf where once they bled!

Yea, when the frowning bulwarks
  That guard this holy strand
Have sunk beneath the trampling surge
  In beds of sparkling sand,
While in the waste of ocean
  One hoary rock shall stand,
Be this its latest legend, —
  HERE WAS THE PILGRIM'S LAND!

THE STEAMBOAT

See how yon flaming herald treads
The ridged and rolling waves,
As, crashing o'er their crested heads,
She bows her surly slaves!
With foam before and fire behind,
She rends the clinging sea,
That flies before the roaring wind,
Beneath her hissing lee.

The morning spray, like sea-born flowers,
With heaped and glistening bells,
Falls round her fast, in ringing showers,
With every wave that swells;
And, burning o'er the midnight deep,
In lurid fringes thrown,
The living gems of ocean sweep
Along her flashing zone.

With clashing wheel and lifting keel,
And smoking torch on high,
When winds are loud and billows reel,
She thunders foaming by;
When seas are silent and serene,
With even beam she glides,
The sunshine glimmering through the green
That skirts her gleaming sides.

Now, like a wild nymph, far apart
She veils her shadowy form,

The beating of her restless heart
Still sounding through the storm;
Now answers, like a courtly dame,
The reddening surges o'er,
With flying scarf of spangled flame,
The Pharos of the shore.

To-night yon pilot shall not sleep,
Who trims his narrowed sail;
To-night yon frigate scarce shall keep
Her broad breast to the gale;
And many a foresail, scooped and strained,
Shall break from yard and stay,
Before this smoky wreath has stained
The rising mist of day.

Hark! hark! I hear yon whistling shroud,
I see yon quivering mast;
The black throat of the hunted cloud
Is panting forth the blast!
An hour, and, whirled like winnowing chaff,
The giant surge shall fling
His tresses o'er yon pennon staff,
White as the sea-bird's wing!

Yet rest, ye wanderers of the deep;
Nor wind nor wave shall tire
Those fleshless arms, whose pulses leap
With floods of living fire;
Sleep on, and, when the morning light
Streams o'er the shining bay,
Oh think of those for whom the night
Shall never wake in day!

LEXINGTON

Slowly the mist o'er the meadow was creeping,
Bright on the dewy buds glistened the sun,
When from his couch, while his children were sleeping,
Rose the bold rebel and shouldered his gun.
Waving her golden veil
Over the silent dale,
Blithe looked the morning on cottage and spire;
Hushed was his parting sigh,
While from his noble eye
Flashed the last sparkle of liberty's fire.

On the smooth green where the fresh leaf is springing
Calmly the first-born of glory have met;
Hark! the death-volley around them is ringing!
Look! with their life-blood the young grass is wet!
Faint is the feeble breath,
Murmuring low in death,
"Tell to our sons how their fathers have died;"
Nerveless the iron hand,
Raised for its native land,
Lies by the weapon that gleams at its side.

Over the hillsides the wild knell is tolling,
From their far hamlets the yeomanry come;
As through the storm-clouds the thunder-burst rolling,

Circles the beat of the mustering drum.
Fast on the soldier's path
Darken the waves of wrath, —
Long have they gathered and loud shall they fall;
Red glares the musket's flash,
Sharp rings the rifle's crash,
Blazing and clanging from thicket and wall.

Gayly the plume of the horseman was dancing,
Never to shadow his cold brow again;
Proudly at morning the war-steed was prancing,
Reeking and panting he droops on the rein;
Pale is the lip of scorn,
Voiceless the trumpet horn,
Torn is the silken-fringed red cross on high;
Many a belted breast
Low on the turf shall rest
Ere the dark hunters the herd have passed by.

Snow-girdled crags where the hoarse wind is raving,
Rocks where the weary floods murmur and wail,
Wilds where the fern by the furrow is waving,
Reeled with the echoes that rode on the gale;
Far as the tempest thrills
Over the darkened hills,
Far as the sunshine streams over the plain,
Roused by the tyrant band,
Woke all the mighty land,
Girded for battle, from mountain to main.

Green be the graves where her martyrs are lying!
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their rest,

While o'er their ashes the starry fold flying
Wraps the proud eagle they roused from his nest.
Borne on her Northern pine,
Long o'er the foaming brine
Spread her broad banner to storm and to sun;
Heaven keep her ever free,
Wide as o'er land and sea
Floats the fair emblem her heroes have won!

ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL

This "punch-bowl" was, according to old family tradition, a *caudle-cup*. It is a massive piece of silver, its cherubs and other ornaments of coarse repoussé work, and has two handles like a loving-cup, by which it was held, or passed from guest to guest.

THIS ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times,
Of joyous days and jolly nights, and merry Christmas times;
They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,
Who dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar, — so runs the ancient tale;
'T was hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose arm was like a flail;
And now and then between the strokes, for fear his strength should fail,
He wiped his brow and quaffed a cup of good old Flemish ale.

'T was purchased by an English squire to please
his loving dame,
Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing for
the same;
And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was
found,
'T was filled with caudle spiced and hot, and handed
smoking round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan
divine,
Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little
wine,
But hated punch and prelacy; and so it was, per-
haps,
He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles
and schnapps.

And then, of course, you know what 's next: it
left the Dutchman's shore
With those that in the Mayflower came, — a hun-
dred souls and more, —
Along with all the furniture, to fill their new
abodes, —
To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hun-
dred loads.

'T was on a dreary winter's eve, the night was
closing dim,
When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and
filled it to the brim;

The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with
his sword,
And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about
the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in, — the man that
never feared, —
He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his
yellow beard ;
And one by one the musketeers — the men that
fought and prayed —
All drank as 't were their mother's milk, and not a
man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming
eagle flew,
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's
wild halloo ;
And there the sachem learned the rule he taught
to kith and kin,
" Run from the white man when you find he smells
of Hollands gin ! "

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their
leaves and snows,
A thousand rubs had flattened down each little
cherub's nose,
When once again the bowl was filled, but not in
mirth or joy, —
'T was mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her
parting boy.

Drink, John, she said, 't will do you good, — poor
child, you 'll never bear
This working in the dismal trench, out in the mid-
night air;
And if — God bless me! — you were hurt, 't would
keep away the chill.
So John *did* drink, — and well he wrought that
night at Bunker's Hill!

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old
English cheer;
I tell you, 't was a pleasant thought to bring its
symbol here.
'T is but the fool that loves excess; hast thou a
drunken soul?
Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver
bowl!

I love the memory of the past, — its pressed yet
fragrant flowers, —
The moss that clothes its broken walls, the ivy
on its towers;
Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed, — my eyes
grow moist and dim,
To think of all the vanished joys that danced
around its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it straight
to me;
The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er the liquid
be;

And may the cherubs on its face protect me from the sin
That dooms one to those dreadful words, — "My dear, where *have* you been?"

A SONG

FOR THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF HARVARD COLLEGE, 1836

This song, which I had the temerity to sing myself (*felix audacia*, Mr. Franklin Dexter had the goodness to call it), was sent in a little too late to be printed with the official account of the celebration. It was written at the suggestion of Dr. Jacob Bigelow, who thought the popular tune "The Poacher's Song" would be a good model for a lively ballad or ditty. He himself wrote the admirable Latin song to be found in the record of the meeting.

WHEN the Puritans came over
Our hills and swamps to clear,
The woods were full of catamounts,
And Indians red as deer,
With tomahawks and scalping-knives,
That make folks' heads look queer;
Oh the ship from England used to bring
A hundred wigs a year!

The crows came cawing through the air
To pluck the Pilgrims' corn,
The bears came snuffing round the door
Whene'er a babe was born,
The rattlesnakes were bigger round
Than the but of the old ram's horn

The deacon blew at meeting time
On every "Sabbath" morn.

But soon they knocked the wigwams down,
And pine-tree trunk and limb
Began to sprout among the leaves
In shape of steeples slim;
And out the little wharves were stretched
Along the ocean's rim,
And up the little school-house shot
To keep the boys in trim.

And when at length the College rose,
The sachem cocked his eye
At every tutor's meagre ribs
Whose coat-tails whistled by:
But when the Greek and Hebrew words
Came tumbling from his jaws,
The copper-colored children all
Ran screaming to the squaws.

And who was on the Catalogue
When college was begun?
Two nephews of the President,
And *the* Professor's son;
(They turned a little Indian by,
As brown as any bun;)
Lord! how the seniors knocked about
The freshman class of one!

They had not then the dainty things
That commons now afford,

But succotash and hominy
  Were smoking on the board;
They did not rattle round in gigs,
  Or dash in long-tailed blues,
But always on Commencement days
  The tutors blacked their shoes.

God bless the ancient Puritans!
  Their lot was hard enough;
But honest hearts make iron arms,
  And tender maids are tough;
So love and faith have formed and fed
  Our true-born Yankee stuff,
And keep the kernel in the shell
  The British found so rough!

THE ISLAND HUNTING-SONG

The island referred to is a domain of princely proportions, which has long been the seat of a generous hospitality. Naushon is its old Indian name. William Swain, Esq., commonly known as "the Governor," was the proprietor of it at the time when this song was written. Mr. John M. Forbes is his worthy successor in territorial rights and as a hospitable entertainer. The *Island Book* has been the recipient of many poems from visitors and friends of the owners of the old mansion.

No more the summer floweret charms,
  The leaves will soon be sere,
And Autumn folds his jewelled arms
  Around the dying year;
So, ere the waning seasons claim
  Our leafless groves awhile,

With golden wine and glowing flame
We 'll crown our lonely isle.

Once more the merry voices sound
Within the antlered hall,
And long and loud the baying hounds
Return the hunter's call;
And through the woods, and o'er the hill,
And far along the bay,
The driver's horn is sounding shrill, —
Up, sportsmen, and away!

No bars of steel or walls of stone
Our little empire bound,
But, circling with his azure zone,
The sea runs foaming round;
The whitening wave, the purpled skies,
The blue and lifted shore,
Braid with their dim and blending dyes
Our wide horizon o'er.

And who will leave the grave debate
That shakes the smoky town,
To rule amid our island-state,
And wear our oak-leaf crown?
And who will be awhile content
To hunt our woodland game,
And leave the vulgar pack that scent
The reeking track of fame?

Ah, who that shares in toils like these
Will sigh not to prolong

Our days beneath the broad-leaved trees,
Our nights of mirth and song?
Then leave the dust of noisy streets,
Ye outlaws of the wood,
And follow through his green retreats
Your noble Robin Hood.

DEPARTED DAYS

Yes, dear departed, cherished days,
Could Memory's hand restore
Your morning light, your evening rays,
From Time's gray urn once more,
Then might this restless heart be still,
This straining eye might close,
And Hope her fainting pinions fold,
While the fair phantoms rose.

But, like a child in ocean's arms,
We strive against the stream,
Each moment farther from the shore
Where life's young fountains gleam;
Each moment fainter wave the fields,
And wider rolls the sea;
The mist grows dark, — the sun goes down, —
Day breaks, — and where are we?

THE ONLY DAUGHTER

ILLUSTRATION OF A PICTURE

They bid me strike the idle strings,
As if my summer days
Had shaken sunbeams from their wings
To warm my autumn lays;
They bring to me their painted urn,
As if it were not time
To lift my gauntlet and to spurn
The lists of boyish rhyme;
And were it not that I have still
Some weakness in my heart
That clings around my stronger will
And pleads for gentler art,
Perchance I had not turned away
The thoughts grown tame with toil,
To cheat this lone and pallid ray,
That wastes the midnight oil.

Alas! with every year I feel
Some roses leave my brow;
Too young for wisdom's tardy seal,
Too old for garlands now.
Yet, while the dewy breath of spring
Steals o'er the tingling air,
And spreads and fans each emerald wing
The forest soon shall wear,
How bright the opening year would seem,
Had I one look like thine

To meet me when the morning beam
Unseals these lids of mine!
Too long I bear this lonely lot,
That bids my heart run wild
To press the lips that love me not,
To clasp the stranger's child.

How oft beyond the dashing seas,
Amidst those royal bowers,
Where danced the lilacs in the breeze,
And swung the chestnut-flowers,
I wandered like a wearied slave
Whose morning task is done,
To watch the little hands that gave
Their whiteness to the sun;
To revel in the bright young eyes,
Whose lustre sparkled through
The sable fringe of Southern skies
Or gleamed in Saxon blue!
How oft I heard another's name
Called in some truant's tone;
Sweet accents! which I longed to claim,
To learn and lisp my own!

Too soon the gentle hands, that pressed
The ringlets of the child,
Are folded on the faithful breast
Where first he breathed and smiled;
Too oft the clinging arms untwine,
The melting lips forget,
And darkness veils the bridal shrine
Where wreaths and torches met;

If Heaven but leaves a single thread
  Of Hope's dissolving chain,
Even when her parting plumes are spread,
  It bids them fold again;
The cradle rocks beside the tomb;
  The cheek now changed and chill
Smiles on us in the morning bloom
  Of one that loves us still.

Sweet image! I have done thee wrong
  To claim this destined lay;
The leaf that asked an idle song
  Must bear my tears away.
Yet, in thy memory shouldst thou keep
  This else forgotten strain,
Till years have taught thine eyes to weep,
  And flattery's voice is vain;
Oh then, thou fledgling of the nest,
  Like the long-wandering dove,
Thy weary heart may faint for rest,
  As mine, on changeless love;
And while these sculptured lines retrace
  The hours now dancing by,
This vision of thy girlish grace
  May cost thee, too, a sigh.

SONG

WRITTEN FOR THE DINNER GIVEN TO CHARLES DICKENS BY THE YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON, FEBRUARY 1, 1842

THE stars their early vigils keep,
The silent hours are near,
When drooping eyes forget to weep, —
Yet still we linger here;
And what — the passing churl may ask —
Can claim such wondrous power,
That Toil forgets his wonted task,
And Love his promised hour?

The Irish harp no longer thrills,
Or breathes a fainter tone;
The clarion blast from Scotland's hills,
Alas! no more is blown;
And Passion's burning lip bewails
Her Harold's wasted fire,
Still lingering o'er the dust that veils
The Lord of England's lyre.

But grieve not o'er its broken strings,
Nor think its soul hath died,
While yet the lark at heaven's gate sings,
As once o'er Avon's side;
While gentle summer sheds her bloom,
And dewy blossoms wave,
Alike o'er Juliet's storied tomb
And Nelly's nameless grave.

Thou glorious island of the sea!
Though wide the wasting flood
That parts our distant land from thee,
We claim thy generous blood;
Nor o'er thy far horizon springs
One hallowed star of fame,
But kindles, like an angel's wings,
Our western skies in flame!

LINES

RECITED AT THE BERKSHIRE JUBILEE, PITTSFIELD, MASS., AUGUST 23, 1844

COME back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants for riches or fame!
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,
She calls you to feast from her bountiful lap.

Come out from your alleys, your courts, and your lanes,
And breathe, like young eagles, the air of our plains;
Take a whiff from our fields, and your excellent wives
Will declare it 's all nonsense insuring your lives.

Come you of the law, who can talk, if you please,
Till the man in the moon will allow it 's a cheese,
And leave "the old lady, that never tells lies,"
To sleep with her handkerchief over her eyes.

Ye healers of men, for a moment decline
Your feats in the rhubarb and ipecac line;
While you shut up your turnpike, your neighbors can go
The old roundabout road to the regions below.

You clerk, on whose ears are a couple of pens,
And whose head is an ant-hill of units and tens,
Though Plato denies you, we welcome you still
As a featherless biped, in spite of your quill.

Poor drudge of the city! how happy he feels,
With the burs on his legs and the grass at his heels!
No *dodger* behind, his bandannas to share,
No constable grumbling, "You must n't walk there!"

In yonder green meadow, to memory dear,
He slaps a mosquito and brushes a tear;
The dew-drops hang round him on blossoms and shoots,
He breathes but one sigh for his youth and his boots.

There stands the old school-house, hard by the old church;
That tree at its side had the flavor of birch;
Oh, sweet were the days of his juvenile tricks,
Though the prairie of youth had so many "big licks."

By the side of yon river he weeps and he slumps,
The boots fill with water, as if they were pumps,
Till, sated with rapture, he steals to his bed,
With a glow in his heart and a cold in his head.

'T is past, — he is dreaming, — I see him again;
The ledger returns as by legerdemain;
His neckcloth is damp with an easterly flaw,
And he holds in his fingers an omnibus straw.

He dreams the chill gust is a blossomy gale,
That the straw is a rose from his dear native vale;
And murmurs, unconscious of space and of time,
"A 1. Extra super. Ah, is n't it PRIME!"

Oh, what are the prizes we perish to win
To the first little "shiner" we caught with a pin!
No soil upon earth is so dear to our eyes
As the soil we first stirred in terrestrial pies!

Then come from all parties and parts to our feast;
Though not at the "Astor," we 'll give you at least
A bite at an apple, a seat on the grass,
And the best of old — water — at nothing a glass.

NUX POSTCŒNATICA

I WAS sitting with my microscope, upon my parlor rug,
With a very heavy quarto and a very lively bug;

The true bug had been organized with only two
antennæ,
But the humbug in the copperplate would have
them twice as many.

And I thought, like Dr. Faustus, of the emptiness
of art,
How we take a fragment for the whole, and call
the whole a part,
When I heard a heavy footstep that was loud
enough for two,
And a man of forty entered, exclaiming, "How
d' ye do?"

He was not a ghost, my visitor, but solid flesh and
bone;
He wore a Palo Alto hat, his weight was twenty
stone;
(It's odd how hats expand their brims as riper
years invade,
As if when life had reached its noon it wanted
them for shade!)

I lost my focus, — dropped my book, — the bug,
who was a flea,
At once exploded, and commenced experiments on
me.
They have a certain heartiness that frequently
appalls, —
Those mediæval gentlemen in semilunar smalls!

"My boy," he said, (colloquial ways, — the vast,
broad-hatted man,)

"Come dine with us on Thursday next, — you must, you know you can;
We 're going to have a roaring time, with lots of fun and noise,
Distinguished guests, et cetera, the JUDGE, and all the boys."

Not so, — I said, — my temporal bones are showing pretty clear.
It 's time to stop, — just look and see that hair above this ear;
My golden days are more than spent, — and, what is very strange,
If these are real silver hairs, I 'm getting lots of change.

Besides — my prospects — don't you know that people won't employ
A man that wrongs his manliness by laughing like a boy?
And suspect the azure blossom that unfolds upon a shoot,
As if wisdom's old potato could not flourish at its root?

It 's a very fine reflection, when you 're etching out a smile
On a copperplate of faces that would stretch at least a mile,
That, what with sneers from enemies and cheapening shrugs of friends,
It will cost you all the earnings that a month of labor lends!

It 's a vastly pleasing prospect, when you 're screwing out a laugh,
That your very next year's income is diminished by a half,
And a little boy trips barefoot that Pegasus may go,
And the baby's milk is watered that your Helicon may flow!

No; — the joke has been a good one, — but I 'm getting fond of quiet,
And I don't like deviations from my customary diet;
So I think I will not go with you to hear the toasts and speeches,
But stick to old Montgomery Place, and have some pig and peaches.

The fat man answered: Shut your mouth, and hear the genuine creed;
The true essentials of a feast are only fun and feed;
The force that wheels the planets round delights in spinning tops,
And that young earthquake t' other day was great at shaking props.

I tell you what, philosopher, if all the longest heads
That ever knocked their sinciputs in stretching on their beds

Were round one great mahogany, I 'd beat those
fine old folks
With twenty dishes, twenty fools, and twenty clever
jokes!

Why, if Columbus should be there, the company
would beg
He 'd show that little trick of his of balancing the
egg!
Milton to Stilton would give in, and Solomon to
Salmon,
And Roger Bacon be a bore, and Francis Bacon
gammon!

And as for all the "patronage" of all the clowns
and boors
That squint their little narrow eyes at any freak of
yours,
Do leave them to your prosier friends, — such fel-
lows ought to die
When rhubarb is so very scarce and ipecac so high!

And so I come, — like Lochinvar, to tread a single
measure, —
To purchase with a loaf of bread a sugar-plum of
pleasure,
To enter for the cup of glass that 's run for after
dinner,
Which yields a single sparkling draught, then
breaks and cuts the winner.

Ah, that 's the way delusion comes, — a glass of
old Madeira,

A pair of visual diaphragms revolved by Jane or Sarah,
And down go vows and promises without the slightest question
If eating words won't compromise the organs of digestion!

And yet, among my native shades, beside my nursing mother,
Where every stranger seems a friend, and every friend a brother,
I feel the old convivial glow (unaided) o'er me stealing, —
The warm, champagny, old-particular, brandy-punchy feeling.

We 're all alike; — Vesuvius flings the scoriæ from his fountain,
But down they come in volleying rain back to the burning mountain;
We leave, like those volcanic stones, our precious Alma Mater,
But will keep dropping in again to see the dear old crater.

VERSES FOR AFTER-DINNER

PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY, 1844

I WAS thinking last night, as I sat in the cars,
With the charmingest prospect of cinders and stars,

Next Thursday is — bless me! — how hard it will be,
If that cannibal president calls upon me!

There is nothing on earth that he will not devour,
From a tutor in seed to a freshman in flower;
No sage is too gray, and no youth is too green,
And you can't be too plump, though you 're never too lean.

While others enlarge on the boiled and the roast,
He serves a raw clergyman up with a toast,
Or catches some doctor, quite tender and young,
And basely insists on a bit of his tongue.

Poor victim, prepared for his classical spit,
With a stuffing of praise and a basting of wit,
You may twitch at your collar and wrinkle your brow,
But you 're up on your legs, and you 're in for it now.

Oh think of your friends, — they are waiting to hear
Those jokes that are thought so remarkably queer;
And all the Jack Horners of metrical buns
Are prying and fingering to pick out the puns.

Those thoughts which, like chickens, will always thrive best
When reared by the heat of the natural nest,
Will perish if hatched from their embryo dream
In the mist and the glow of convivial steam.

Oh pardon me, then, if I meekly retire,
With a very small flash of ethereal fire;
No rubbing will kindle your Lucifer match,
If the *fiz* does not follow the primitive scratch.

Dear friends, who are listening so sweetly the while,
With your lips double-reefed in a snug little smile,
I leave you two fables, both drawn from the deep, —
The shells you can drop, but the pearls you may keep.

. . . . . .

The fish called the FLOUNDER, perhaps you may know,
Has one side for use and another for show;
One side for the public, a delicate brown,
And one that is white, which he always keeps down.

A very young flounder, the flattest of flats,
(And they 're none of them thicker than opera hats,)
Was speaking more freely than charity taught
Of a friend and relation that just had been caught.

"My! what an exposure! just see what a sight!
I blush for my race, — he is showing his white!

Such spinning and wriggling, — why, what does he wish?
How painfully small to respectable fish!"

Then said an old SCULPIN, — "My freedom excuse,
You 're playing the cobbler with holes in your shoes;
Your brown side is up, — but just wait till you 're tried
And you 'll find that all flounders are white on one side."

. . . . . .

There 's a slice near the PICKEREL'S pectoral fins,
Where the *thorax* leaves off and the *venter* begins,
Which his brother, survivor of fish-hooks and lines,
Though fond of his family, never declines.

He loves his relations; he feels they 'll be missed;
But that one little tidbit he cannot resist;
So your bait may be swallowed, no matter how fast,
For you catch your next fish with a piece of the last.

And thus, O survivor, whose merciless fate
Is to take the next hook with the president's bait,
You are lost while you snatch from the end of his line
The morsel he rent from this bosom of mine!

A MODEST REQUEST

COMPLIED WITH AFTER THE DINNER AT PRESIDENT EVERETT'S INAUGURATION

Scene, — a back parlor in a certain square,
Or court, or lane, — in short, no matter where;
Time, — early morning, dear to simple souls
Who love its sunshine and its fresh-baked rolls;
Persons, — take pity on this telltale blush,
That, like the Æthiop, whispers, "Hush, oh hush!"

Delightful scene! where smiling comfort broods,
Nor business frets, nor anxious care intrudes;
O si sic omnia! were it ever so!
But what is stable in this world below?
Medio e fonte, — Virtue has her faults, —
The clearest fountains taste of Epsom salts;
We snatch the cup and lift to drain it dry, —
Its central dimple holds a drowning fly!
Strong is the pine by Maine's ambrosial streams,
But stronger augers pierce its thickest beams;
No iron gate, no spiked and panelled door,
Can keep out death, the postman, or the bore.
Oh for a world where peace and silence reign,
And blunted dulness terebrates in vain!
— The door-bell jingles, — enter Richard Fox,
And takes this letter from his leathern box.

"Dear Sir,—
In writing on a former day,
One little matter I forgot to say;

I now inform you in a single line,
On Thursday next our purpose is to *dine.*
The act of feeding, as you understand,
Is but a fraction of the work in hand;
Its nobler half is that ethereal meat
The papers call 'the intellectual treat;'
Songs, speeches, toasts, around the festive board
Drowned in the juice the College pumps afford;
For only water flanks our knives and forks,
So, sink or float, we swim without the corks.
Yours is the art, by native genius taught,
To clothe in eloquence the naked thought;
Yours is the skill its music to prolong
Through the sweet effluence of mellifluous song;
Yours the quaint trick to cram the pithy line
That cracks so crisply over bubbling wine;
And since success your various gifts attends,
We — that is, I and all your numerous friends —
Expect from you — your single self a host —
A speech, a song, excuse me, *and* a toast;
Nay, not to haggle on so small a claim,
A few of each, or several of the same.
(Signed), Yours, *most truly*, ——"

No! my sight must fail, —
If that ain't Judas on the largest scale!
Well, this *is* modest; — nothing else than that?
My coat? my boots? my pantaloons? my hat?
My stick? my gloves? as well as all my wits,
Learning and linen, — everything that fits!

Jack, said my lady, is it grog you 'll try,
Or punch, or toddy, if perhaps you 're dry?

Ah, said the sailor, though I can't refuse,
You know, my lady, 't ain't for me to choose;
I 'll take the grog to finish off my lunch,
And drink the toddy while you mix the punch.

THE SPEECH. (The speaker, rising to be seen,
Looks very red, because so very green.)
I rise — I rise — with unaffected fear,
(Louder! — speak louder! — who the deuce can hear?)
I rise — I said — with undisguised dismay —
— Such are my feelings as I rise, I say!
Quite unprepared to face this learned throng,
Already gorged with eloquence and song;
Around my view are ranged on either hand
The genius, wisdom, virtue of the land;
"Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed"
Close at my elbow stir their lemonade;
Would you like Homer learn to write and speak,
That bench is groaning with its weight of Greek;
Behold the naturalist who in his teens
Found six new species in a dish of greens;
And lo, the master in a statelier walk,
Whose annual ciphering takes a ton of chalk;
And there the linguist, who by common roots
Thro' all their nurseries tracks old Noah's shoots,—
How Shem's proud children reared the Assyrian piles,
While Ham's were scattered through the Sandwich Isles!

— Fired at the thought of all the present shows,
My kindling fancy down the future flows:
I see the glory of the coming days
O'er Time's horizon shoot its streaming rays;
Near and more near the radiant morning draws
In living lustre (rapturous applause);
From east to west the blazing heralds run,
Loosed from the chariot of the ascending sun,
Through the long vista of uncounted years
In cloudless splendor (three tremendous cheers).
My eye prophetic, as the depths unfold,
Sees a new advent of the age of gold;
While o'er the scene new generations press,
New heroes rise the coming time to bless, —
Not such as Homer's, who, we read in Pope,
Dined without forks and never heard of soap, —
Not such as May to Marlborough Chapel brings,
Lean, hungry, savage, anti-everythings,
Copies of Luther in the pasteboard style, —
But genuine articles, the true Carlyle;
While far on high the blazing orb shall shed
Its central light on Harvard's holy head,
And learning's ensigns ever float unfurled
Here in the focus of the new-born world!
The speaker stops, and, trampling down the pause,
Roars through the hall the thunder of applause,
One stormy gust of long-suspended Ahs!
One whirlwind chaos of insane hurrahs!

THE SONG. But this demands a briefer line, —
A shorter muse, and not the old long Nine ;
Long metre answers for a common song,
Though common metre does not answer long.

She came beneath the forest dome
To seek its peaceful shade,
An exile from her ancient home,
A poor, forsaken maid ;
No banner, flaunting high above,
No blazoned cross, she bore ;
One holy book of light and love
Was all her worldly store.

The dark brown shadows passed away,
And wider spread the green,
And where the savage used to stray
The rising mart was seen ;
So, when the laden winds had brought
Their showers of golden rain,
Her lap some precious gleanings caught,
Like Ruth's amid the grain.

But wrath soon gathered uncontrolled
Among the baser churls,
To see her ankles red with gold,
Her forehead white with pearls.
" Who gave to thee the glittering bands
That lace thine azure veins ?
Who bade thee lift those snow-white hands
We bound in gilded chains ? "

"These are the gems my children gave,"
The stately dame replied;
"The wise, the gentle, and the brave,
I nurtured at my side.
If envy still your bosom stings,
Take back their rims of gold;
My sons will melt their wedding-rings,
And give a hundred-fold!"

THE TOAST. Oh tell me, ye who thoughtless ask
Exhausted nature for a threefold task,
In wit or pathos if one share remains,
A safe investment for an ounce of brains!
Hard is the job to launch the desperate pun,
A pun-job dangerous as the Indian one.
Turned by the current of some stronger wit
Back from the object that you mean to hit,
Like the strange missile which the Australian throws,
Your verbal *boomerang* slaps you on the nose.
One vague inflection spoils the whole with doubt,
One trivial letter ruins all, left out;
A knot can choke a felon into clay,
A not will save him, spelt without the k;
The smallest word has some unguarded spot,
And danger lurks in i without a dot.

Thus great Achilles, who had shown his zeal
In healing wounds, died of a wounded heel;
Unhappy chief, who, when in childhood doused,

Had saved his bacon had his feet been soused!
Accursèd heel that killed a hero stout!
Oh, had your mother known that you were out,
Death had not entered at the trifling part
That still defies the small chirurgeon's art
With corns and bunions, — not the glorious John,
Who wrote the book we all have pondered on,
But other bunions, bound in fleecy hose,
To "Pilgrim's Progress" unrelenting foes!

A HEALTH, unmingled with the reveller's wine,
To him whose title is indeed divine;
Truth's sleepless watchman on her midnight tower,
Whose lamp burns brightest when the tempests lower.
Oh, who can tell with what a leaden flight
Drag the long watches of his weary night,
While at his feet the hoarse and blinding gale
Strews the torn wreck and bursts the fragile sail,
When stars have faded, when the wave is dark,
When rocks and sands embrace the foundering bark!
But still he pleads with unavailing cry,
Behold the light, O wanderer, look or die!

A health, fair Themis! Would the enchanted vine
Wreathed its green tendrils round this cup of thine!
If Learning's radiance fill thy modern court,
Its glorious sunshine streams through Blackstone's port!

Lawyers are thirsty, and their clients too, —
Witness at least, if memory serve me true,
Those old tribunals, famed for dusty suits,
Where men sought justice ere they brushed their boots;
And what can match, to solve a learned doubt,
The warmth within that comes from "cold without"?

Health to the art whose glory is to give
The crowning boon that makes it life to live.
Ask not her home; — the rock where nature flings
Her arctic lichen, last of living things;
The gardens, fragrant with the orient's balm,
From the low jasmine to the star-like palm,
Hail her as mistress o'er the distant waves,
And yield their tribute to her wandering slaves.
Wherever, moistening the ungrateful soil,
The tear of suffering tracks the path of toil,
There, in the anguish of his fevered hours,
Her gracious finger points to healing flowers;
Where the lost felon steals away to die,
Her soft hand waves before his closing eye;
Where hunted misery finds his darkest lair,
The midnight taper shows her kneeling there!
VIRTUE, — the guide that men and nations own;
And LAW, — the bulwark that protects her throne;
And HEALTH, — to all its happiest charm that lends;
These and their servants, man's untiring friends:
Pour the bright lymph that Heaven itself lets fall,
In one fair bumper let us toast them all!

THE PARTING WORD

I MUST leave thee, lady sweet!
Months shall waste before we meet;
Winds are fair and sails are spread,
Anchors leave their ocean bed;
Ere this shining day grow dark,
Skies shall gird my shoreless bark.
Through thy tears, O lady mine,
Read thy lover's parting line.

When the first sad sun shall set,
Thou shalt tear thy locks of jet;
When the morning star shall rise,
Thou shalt wake with weeping eyes;
When the second sun goes down,
Thou more tranquil shalt be grown,
Taught too well that wild despair
Dims thine eyes and spoils thy hair.

All the first unquiet week
Thou shalt wear a smileless cheek;
In the first month's second half
Thou shalt once attempt to laugh;
Then in Pickwick thou shalt dip,
Slightly puckering round the lip,
Till at last, in sorrow's spite,
Samuel makes thee laugh outright.

While the first seven mornings last,
Round thy chamber bolted fast

Many a youth shall fume and pout,
"Hang the girl, she 's always out!"
While the second week goes round,
Vainly shall they ring and pound;
When the third week shall begin,
"Martha, let the creature in."

Now once more the flattering throng
Round thee flock with smile and song,
But thy lips, unweaned as yet,
Lisp, "Oh, how can I forget!"
Men and devils both contrive
Traps for catching girls alive;
Eve was duped, and Helen kissed, —
How, oh how can you resist?

First be careful of your fan,
Trust it not to youth or man;
Love has filled a pirate's sail
Often with its perfumed gale.
Mind your kerchief most of all,
Fingers touch when kerchiefs fall;
Shorter ell than mercers clip
Is the space from hand to lip.

Trust not such as talk in tropes,
Full of pistols, daggers, ropes;
All the hemp that Russia bears
Scarce would answer lovers' prayers;
Never thread was spun so fine,
Never spider stretched the line,
Would not hold the lovers true
That would really swing for you.

Fiercely some shall storm and swear,
Beating breasts in black despair;
Others murmur with a sigh,
You must melt, or they will die:
Painted words on empty lies,
Grubs with wings like butterflies;
Let them die, and welcome, too;
Pray what better could they do?

Fare thee well: if years efface
From thy heart love's burning trace,
Keep, oh keep that hallowed seat
From the tread of vulgar feet;
If the blue lips of the sea
Wait with icy kiss for me,
Let not thine forget the vow,
Sealed how often, Love, as now.

A SONG OF OTHER DAYS

As o'er the glacier's frozen sheet
  Breathes soft the Alpine rose,
So through life's desert springing sweet
  The flower of friendship grows;
And as where'er the roses grow
  Some rain or dew descends,
'T is nature's law that wine should flow
  To wet the lips of friends.
    Then once again, before we part,
      My empty glass shall ring;
    And he that has the warmest heart
      Shall loudest laugh and sing.

They say we were not born to eat;
But gray-haired sages think
It means, Be moderate in your meat,
And partly live to drink.
For baser tribes the rivers flow
That know not wine or song;
Man wants but little drink below,
But wants that little strong.
Then once again, etc.

If one bright drop is like the gem
That decks a monarch's crown,
One goblet holds a diadem
Of rubies melted down!
A fig for Cæsar's blazing brow,
But, like the Egyptian queen,
Bid each dissolving jewel glow
My thirsty lips between.
Then once again, etc.

The Grecian's mound, the Roman's urn,
Are silent when we call,
Yet still the purple grapes return
To cluster on the wall;
It was a bright Immortal's head
They circled with the vine,
And o'er their best and bravest dead
They poured the dark-red wine.
Then once again, etc.

Methinks o'er every sparkling glass
Young Eros waves his wings,

And echoes o'er its dimples pass
From dead Anacreon's strings;
And, tossing round its beaded brim
Their locks of floating gold,
With bacchant dance and choral hymn
Return the nymphs of old.
Then once again, etc.

A welcome then to joy and mirth,
From hearts as fresh as ours,
To scatter o'er the dust of earth
Their sweetly mingled flowers;
'T is Wisdom's self the cup that fills
In spite of Folly's frown,
And Nature, from her vine-clad hills,
That rains her life-blood down!
Then once again, before we part,
My empty glass shall ring;
And he that has the warmest heart
Shall loudest laugh and sing.

SONG

FOR A TEMPERANCE DINNER TO WHICH LADIES WERE INVITED (NEW YORK MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, NOVEMBER, 1842)

A HEALTH to dear woman! She bids us untwine,
From the cup it encircles, the fast-clinging vine;
But her cheek in its crystal with pleasure will glow,
And mirror its bloom in the bright wave below.

A health to sweet woman! The days are no more
When she watched for her lord till the revel was o'er,
And smoothed the white pillow, and blushed when he came,
As she pressed her cold lips on his forehead of flame.

Alas for the loved one! too spotless and fair
The joys of his banquet to chasten and share;
Her eye lost its light that his goblet might shine,
And the rose of her cheek was dissolved in his wine.

Joy smiles in the fountain, health flows in the rills,
As their ribbons of silver unwind from the hills;
They breathe not the mist of the bacchanal's dream,
But the lilies of innocence float on their stream.

Then a health and a welcome to woman once more!
She brings us a passport that laughs at our door;
It is written on crimson, — its letters are pearls, —
It is countersigned *Nature*. — So, room for the Girls!

A SENTIMENT

The pledge of Friendship! it is still divine,
Though watery floods have quenched its burning wine;
Whatever vase the sacred drops may hold,
The gourd, the shell, the cup of beaten gold,

Around its brim the hand of Nature throws
A garland sweeter than the banquet's rose.
Bright are the blushes of the vine-wreathed bowl,
Warm with the sunshine of Anacreon's soul,
But dearer memories gild the tasteless wave
That fainting Sidney perished as he gave.
'T is the heart's current lends the cup its glow,
Whate'er the fountain whence the draught may
flow, —
The diamond dew-drops sparkling through the sand,
Scooped by the Arab in his sunburnt hand,
Or the dark streamlet oozing from the snow,
Where creep and crouch the shuddering Esquimaux;
Ay, in the stream that, ere again we meet,
Shall burst the pavement, glistening at our feet,
And, stealing silent from its leafy hills,
Thread all our alleys with its thousand rills, —
In each pale draught if generous feeling blend,
And o'er the goblet friend shall smile on friend,
Even cold Cochituate every heart shall warm,
And genial Nature still defy reform!

A RHYMED LESSON

(URANIA)

This poem was delivered before the Boston Mercantile Library Association, October 14, 1846.

YES, dear Enchantress,—wandering far and long,
In realms unperfumed by the breath of song,
Where flowers ill-flavored shed their sweets around,
And bitterest roots invade the ungenial ground,

Whose gems are crystals from the Epsom mine,
Whose vineyards flow with antimonial wine,
Whose gates admit no mirthful feature in,
Save one gaunt mocker, the Sardonic grin,
Whose pangs are real, not the woes of rhyme
That blue-eyed misses warble out of time ; —
Truant, not recreant to thy sacred claim,
Older by reckoning, but in heart the same,
Freed for a moment from the chains of toil,
I tread once more thy consecrated soil ;
Here at thy feet my old allegiance own,
Thy subject still, and loyal to thy throne!

My dazzled glance explores the crowded hall;
Alas, how vain to hope the smiles of all!
I know my audience. All the gay and young
Love the light antics of a playful tongue ;
And these, remembering some expansive line
My lips let loose among the nuts and wine,
Are all impatience till the opening pun
Proclaims the witty shamfight is begun.
Two fifths at least, if not the total half,
Have come infuriate for an earthquake laugh;
I know full well what alderman has tied
His red bandanna tight about his side ;
I see the mother, who, aware that boys
Perform their laughter with superfluous noise,
Beside her kerchief brought an extra one
To stop the explosions of her bursting son ;
I know a tailor, once a friend of mine,
Expects great doings in the button line, —
For mirth's concussions rip the outward case,

And plant the stitches in a tenderer place.
I know my audience, — these shall have their due;
A smile awaits them ere my song is through!

I know myself. Not servile for applause,
My Muse permits no deprecating clause;
Modest or vain, she will not be denied
One bold confession due to honest pride;
And well she knows the drooping veil of song
Shall save her boldness from the caviller's wrong.
Her sweeter voice the Heavenly Maid imparts
To tell the secrets of our aching hearts:
For this, a suppliant, captive, prostrate, bound,
She kneels imploring at the feet of sound;
For this, convulsed in thought's maternal pains,
She loads her arms with rhyme's resounding chains;
Faint though the music of her fetters be,
It lends one charm, — her lips are ever free!

Think not I come, in manhood's fiery noon,
To steal his laurels from the stage buffoon;
His sword of lath the harlequin may wield;
Behold the star upon my lifted shield!
Though the just critic pass my humble name,
And sweeter lips have drained the cup of fame,
While my gay stanza pleased the banquet's lords,
The soul within was tuned to deeper chords!
Say, shall my arms, in other conflicts taught
To swing aloft the ponderous mace of thought,
Lift, in obedience to a school-girl's law,
Mirth's tinsel wand or laughter's tickling straw?

Say, shall I wound with satire's rankling spear
The pure, warm hearts that bid me welcome here?
No! while I wander through the land of dreams,
To strive with great and play with trifling themes,
Let some kind meaning fill the varied line.
You have your judgment; will you trust to mine?

Between two breaths what crowded mysteries lie, —
The first short gasp, the last and long-drawn sigh!
Like phantoms painted on the magic slide,
Forth from the darkness of the past we glide,
As living shadows for a moment seen
In airy pageant on the eternal screen,
Traced by a ray from one unchanging flame,
Then seek the dust and stillness whence we came.

But whence and why, our trembling souls inquire,
Caught these dim visions their awakening fire?
Oh, who forgets when first the piercing thought
Through childhood's musings found its way unsought?
I AM; — I LIVE. The mystery and the fear
When the dread question, WHAT HAS BROUGHT ME HERE?
Burst through life's twilight, as before the sun
Roll the deep thunders of the morning gun!

Are angel faces, silent and serene,
Bent on the conflicts of this little scene,
Whose dream-like efforts, whose unreal strife,
Are but the preludes to a larger life?

Or does life's summer see the end of all,
These leaves of being mouldering as they fall,
As the old poet vaguely used to deem,
As WESLEY questioned in his youthful dream?
Oh, could such mockery reach our souls indeed,
Give back the Pharaohs' or the Athenian's creed;
Better than this a Heaven of man's device, —
The Indian's sports, the Moslem's paradise!

Or is our being's only end and aim
To add new glories to our Maker's name,
As the poor insect, shrivelling in the blaze,
Lends a faint sparkle to its streaming rays?
Does earth send upward to the Eternal's ear
The mingled discords of her jarring sphere
To swell his anthem, while creation rings
With notes of anguish from its shattered strings?
Is it for this the immortal Artist means
These conscious, throbbing, agonized machines?

Dark is the soul whose sullen creed can bind
In chains like these the all-embracing Mind;
No! two-faced bigot, thou dost ill reprove
The sensual, selfish, yet benignant Jove,
And praise a tyrant throned in lonely pride,
Who loves himself, and cares for naught beside;
Who gave thee, summoned from primeval night,

A thousand laws, and not a single right, —
A heart to feel, and quivering nerves to thrill,
The sense of wrong, the death-defying will;
Who girt thy senses with this goodly frame,
Its earthly glories and its orbs of flame,
Not for thyself, unworthy of a thought,
Poor helpless victim of a life unsought,
But all for him, unchanging and supreme,
The heartless centre of thy frozen scheme!

Trust not the teacher with his lying scroll,
Who tears the charter of thy shuddering soul;
The God of love, who gave the breath that warms
All living dust in all its varied forms,
Asks not the tribute of a world like this
To fill the measure of his perfect bliss.
Though winged with life through all its radiant shores,
Creation flowed with unexhausted stores
Cherub and seraph had not yet enjoyed;
For this he called thee from the quickening void!
Nor this alone; a larger gift was thine,
A mightier purpose swelled his vast design:
Thought, — conscience, — will, — to make them all thine own,
He rent a pillar from the eternal throne!

Made in his image, thou must nobly dare
The thorny crown of sovereignty to share.
With eye uplifted, it is thine to view,
From thine own centre, Heaven's o'erarching blue;
So round thy heart a beaming circle lies

No fiend can blot, no hypocrite disguise;
From all its orbs one cheering voice is heard,
Full to thine ear it bears the Father's word,
Now, as in Eden where his first-born trod:
"Seek thine own welfare, true to man and God!"
Think not too meanly of thy low estate;
Thou hast a choice; to choose is to create!
Remember whose the sacred lips that tell,
Angels approve thee when thy choice is well;
Remember, One, a judge of righteous men,
Swore to spare Sodom if she held but ten!
Use well the freedom which thy Master gave,
(Think'st thou that Heaven can tolerate a slave?)
And He who made thee to be just and true
Will bless thee, love thee, — ay, respect thee too!

Nature has placed thee on a changeful tide,
To breast its waves, but not without a guide;
Yet, as the needle will forget its aim,
Jarred by the fury of the electric flame,
As the true current it will falsely feel,
Warped from its axis by a freight of steel;
So will thy CONSCIENCE lose its balanced truth
If passion's lightning fall upon thy youth,
So the pure effluence quit its sacred hold
Girt round too deeply with magnetic gold.
Go to yon tower, where busy science plies
Her vast antennæ, feeling through the skies:
That little vernier on whose slender lines
The midnight taper trembles as it shines,
A silent index, tracks the planets' march
In all their wanderings through the ethereal arch;

Tells through the mist where dazzled Mercury burns,
And marks the spot where Uranus returns.
So, till by wrong or negligence effaced,
The living index which thy Maker traced
Repeats the line each starry Virtue draws
Through the wide circuit of creation's laws;
Still tracks unchanged the everlasting ray
Where the dark shadows of temptation stray,
But, once defaced, forgets the orbs of light,
And leaves thee wandering o'er the expanse of night.

"What is thy creed?" a hundred lips inquire;
"Thou seekest God beneath what Christian spire?"
Nor ask they idly, for uncounted lies
Float upward on the smoke of sacrifice;
When man's first incense rose above the plain,
Of earth's two altars one was built by Cain!
Uncursed by doubt, our earliest creed we take;
We love the precepts for the teacher's sake;
The simple lessons which the nursery taught
Fell soft and stainless on the buds of thought,
And the full blossom owes its fairest hue
To those sweet tear-drops of affection's dew.
Too oft the light that led our earlier hours
Fades with the perfume of our cradle flowers;
The clear, cold question chills to frozen doubt;
Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without:
Oh then, if Reason waver at thy side,
Let humbler Memory be thy gentle guide;
Go to thy birthplace, and, if faith was there,
Repeat thy father's creed, thy mother's prayer!

Faith loves to lean on Time's destroying arm,
And age, like distance, lends a double charm;
In dim cathedrals, dark with vaulted gloom,
What holy awe invests the saintly tomb!
There pride will bow, and anxious care expand,
And creeping avarice come with open hand;
The gay can weep, the impious can adore,
From morn's first glimmerings on the chancel floor
Till dying sunset sheds his crimson stains
Through the faint halos of the irised panes.
Yet there are graves, whose rudely-shapen sod
Bears the fresh footprints where the sexton trod;
Graves where the verdure has not dared to shoot,
Where the chance wild-flower has not fixed its root,
Whose slumbering tenants, dead without a name,
The eternal record shall at length proclaim
Pure as the holiest in the long array
Of hooded, mitred, or tiaraed clay!

Come, seek the air; some pictures we may gain
Whose passing shadows shall not be in vain;
Not from the scenes that crowd the stranger's soil,
Not from our own amidst the stir of toil,
But when the Sabbath brings its kind release,
And Care lies slumbering on the lap of Peace.

The air is hushed, the street is holy ground;
Hark! The sweet bells renew their welcome sound:
As one by one awakes each silent tongue,
It tells the turret whence its voice is flung.

The Chapel, last of sublunary things
That stirs our echoes with the name of Kings,
Whose bell, just glistening from the font and forge,
Rolled its proud requiem for the second George,
Solemn and swelling, as of old it rang,
Flings to the wind its deep, sonorous clang;
The simpler pile, that, mindful of the hour
When Howe's artillery shook its half-built tower,
Wears on its bosom, as a bride might do,
The iron breastpin which the "Rebels" threw,
Wakes the sharp echoes with the quivering thrill
Of keen vibrations, tremulous and shrill;
Aloft, suspended in the morning's fire,
Crash the vast cymbals from the Southern spire;
The Giant, standing by the elm-clad green,
His white lance lifted o'er the silent scene,
Whirling in air his brazen goblet round,
Swings from its brim the swollen floods of sound;
While, sad with memories of the olden time,
Throbs from his tower the Northern Minstrel's chime, —
Faint, single tones, that spell their ancient song,
But tears still follow as they breathe along.

Child of the soil, whom fortune sends to range
Where man and nature, faith and customs change,
Borne in thy memory, each familiar tone
Mourns on the winds that sigh in every zone.
When Ceylon sweeps thee with her perfumed breeze
Through the warm billows of the Indian seas;

When — ship and shadow blended both in one —
Flames o'er thy mast the equatorial sun,
From sparkling midnight to refulgent noon
Thy canvas swelling with the still monsoon;
When through thy shrouds the wild tornado sings,
And thy poor sea-bird folds her tattered wings, —
Oft will delusion o'er thy senses steal,
And airy echoes ring the Sabbath peal!
Then, dim with grateful tears, in long array
Rise the fair town, the island-studded bay,
Home, with its smiling board, its cheering fire,
The half-choked welcome of the expecting sire,
The mother's kiss, and, still if aught remain,
Our whispering hearts shall aid the silent strain.
Ah, let the dreamer o'er the taffrail lean
To muse unheeded, and to weep unseen;
Fear not the tropic's dews, the evening's chills,
His heart lies warm among his triple hills!

Turned from her path by this deceitful gleam,
My wayward fancy half forgets her theme.
See through the streets that slumbered in repose
The living current of devotion flows,
Its varied forms in one harmonious band:
Age leading childhood by its dimpled hand;
Want, in the robe whose faded edges fall
To tell of rags beneath the tartan shawl;
And wealth, in silks that, fluttering to appear,
Lift the deep borders of the proud cashmere.
See, but glance briefly, sorrow-worn and pale,
Those sunken cheeks beneath the widow's veil;

Alone she wanders where with *him* she trod,
No arm to stay her, but she leans on God.
While other doublets deviate here and there,
What secret handcuff binds that pretty pair?
Compactest couple! pressing side to side, —
Ah, the white bonnet that reveals the bride!
By the white neckcloth, with its straitened tie,
The sober hat, the Sabbath-speaking eye,
Severe and smileless, he that runs may read
The stern disciple of Geneva's creed:
Decent and slow, behold his solemn march;
Silent he enters through yon crowded arch.
A livelier bearing of the outward man,
The light-hued gloves, the undevout rattan,
Now smartly raised or half profanely twirled, —
A bright, fresh twinkle from the week-day world, —
Tell their plain story; yes, thine eyes behold
A cheerful Christian from the liberal fold.
Down the chill street that curves in gloomiest shade
What marks betray yon solitary maid?
The cheek's red rose that speaks of balmier air,
The Celtic hue that shades her braided hair,
The gilded missal in her kerchief tied, —
Poor Nora, exile from Killarney's side!
Sister in toil, though blanched by colder skies,
That left their azure in her downcast eyes,
See pallid Margaret, Labor's patient child,
Scarce weaned from home, the nursling of the wild,
Where white Katahdin o'er the horizon shines,
And broad Penobscot dashes through the pines.

Still, as she hastes, her careful fingers hold
The unfailing hymn-book in its cambric fold.
Six days at drudgery's heavy wheel she stands,
The seventh sweet morning folds her weary hands.
Yes, child of suffering, thou mayst well be sure
He who ordained the Sabbath loves the poor!

This weekly picture faithful Memory draws,
Nor claims the noisy tribute of applause;
Faint is the glow such barren hopes can lend,
And frail the line that asks no loftier end.
Trust me, kind listener, I will yet beguile
Thy saddened features of the promised smile.
This magic mantle thou must well divide,
It has its sable and its ermine side;
Yet, ere the lining of the robe appears,
Take thou in silence what I give in tears.

Dear listening soul, this transitory scene
Of murmuring stillness, busily serene, —
This solemn pause, the breathing-space of man,
The halt of toil's exhausted caravan, —
Comes sweet with music to thy wearied ear;
Rise with its anthems to a holier sphere!

Deal meekly, gently, with the hopes that guide
The lowliest brother straying from thy side:
If right, they bid thee tremble for thine own;
If wrong, the verdict is for God alone!

What though the champions of thy faith esteem
The sprinkled fountain or baptismal stream;

Shall jealous passions in unseemly strife
Cross their dark weapons o'er the waves of life?

Let my free soul, expanding as it can,
Leave to his scheme the thoughtful Puritan;
But Calvin's dogma shall my lips deride?
In that stern faith my angel Mary died;
Or ask if mercy's milder creed can save,
Sweet sister, risen from thy new-made grave?

True, the harsh founders of thy church reviled
That ancient faith, the trust of Erin's child;
Must thou be raking in the crumbled past
For racks and fagots in her teeth to cast?
See from the ashes of Helvetia's pile
The whitened skull of old Servetus smile!
Round her young heart thy "Romish Upas" threw
Its firm, deep fibres, strengthening as she grew;
Thy sneering voice may call them "Popish tricks,"
Her Latin prayers, her dangling crucifix,
But *De Profundis* blessed her father's grave,
That "idol" cross her dying mother gave!
What if some angel looks with equal eyes
On her and thee, the simple and the wise,
Writes each dark fault against thy brighter creed,
And drops a tear with every foolish bead!
Grieve, as thou must, o'er history's reeking page;
Blush for the wrongs that stain thy happier age;
Strive with the wanderer from the better path,
Bearing thy message meekly, not in wrath;
Weep for the frail that err, the weak that fall,
Have thine own faith, — but hope and pray for all!

Faith; Conscience; Love. A meaner task remains,
And humbler thoughts must creep in lowlier strains.
Shalt thou be honest? Ask the worldly schools,
And all will tell thee knaves are busier fools;
Prudent? Industrious? Let not modern pens
Instruct "Poor Richard's" fellow-citizens.

Be firm! One constant element in luck
Is genuine solid old Teutonic pluck.
See yon tall shaft; it felt the earthquake's thrill,
Clung to its base, and greets the sunrise still.

Stick to your aim: the mongrel's hold will slip,
But only crowbars loose the bulldog's grip;
Small as he looks, the jaw that never yields
Drags down the bellowing monarch of the fields!

Yet in opinions look not always back, —
Your wake is nothing, mind the coming track;
Leave what you 've done for what you have to do;
Don't be "consistent," but be simply true.

Don't catch the fidgets; you have found your place
Just in the focus of a nervous race,
Fretful to change and rabid to discuss,
Full of excitements, always in a fuss.
Think of the patriarchs; then compare as men
These lean-cheeked maniacs of the tongue and pen!
Run, if you like, but try to keep your breath;
Work like a man, but don't be worked to death;

And with new notions, — let me change the rule, —
Don't strike the iron till it 's slightly cool.

Choose well your *set;* our feeble nature seeks
The aid of clubs, the countenance of cliques;
And with this object settle first of all
Your weight of metal and your size of ball.
Track not the steps of such as hold you cheap,
Too mean to prize, though good enough to keep;
The "real, genuine, no-mistake Tom Thumbs"
Are little people fed on great men's crumbs.
Yet keep no followers of that hateful brood
That basely mingles with its wholesome food
The tumid reptile, which, the poet said,
Doth wear a precious jewel in his head.

If the wild filly, "Progress," thou wouldst ride,
Have young companions ever at thy side;
But wouldst thou stride the stanch old mare, "Success,"
Go with thine elders, though they please thee less.
Shun such as lounge through afternoons and eves,
And on thy dial write, "Beware of thieves!"
Felon of minutes, never taught to feel
The worth of treasures which thy fingers steal,
Pick my left pocket of its silver dime,
But spare the right, — it holds my golden time!

Does praise delight thee? Choose some *ultra* side, —
A sure old recipe, and often tried;

Be its apostle, congressman, or bard,
Spokesman or jokesman, only drive it hard;
But know the forfeit which thy choice abides,
For on two wheels the poor reformer rides, —
One black with epithets the *anti* throws,
One white with flattery painted by the *pros*.

Though books on MANNERS are not out of print,
An honest tongue may drop a harmless hint.
Stop not, unthinking, every friend you meet,
To spin your wordy fabric in the street;
While you are emptying your colloquial pack,
The fiend *Lumbago* jumps upon his back.
Nor cloud his features with the unwelcome tale
Of how he looks, if haply thin and pale;
Health is a subject for his child, his wife,
And the rude office that insures his life.
Look in his face, to meet thy neighbor's soul,
Not on his garments, to detect a hole;
"How to observe" is what thy pages show,
Pride of thy sex, Miss Harriet Martineau!
Oh, what a precious book the one would be
That taught observers what they 're *not* to see!

I tell in verse — 't were better done in prose —
One curious trick that everybody knows;
Once form this habit, and it 's very strange
How long it sticks, how hard it is to change.
Two friendly people, both disposed to smile,
Who meet, like others, every little while,
Instead of passing with a pleasant bow,
And "How d' ye do?" or "How 's your uncle now?"

Impelled by feelings in their nature kind,
But slightly weak and somewhat undefined,
Rush at each other, make a sudden stand,
Begin to talk, expatiate, and expand;
Each looks quite radiant, seems extremely struck
Their meeting so was such a piece of luck;
Each thinks the other thinks he 's greatly pleased
To screw the vice in which they both are squeezed;
So there they talk, in dust, or mud, or snow,
Both bored to death, and both afraid to go!
Your hat once lifted, do not hang your fire,
Nor, like slow Ajax, fighting still, retire;
When your old castor on your crown you clap,
Go off; you 've mounted your percussion cap.

Some words on LANGUAGE may be well applied,
And take them kindly, though they touch your pride.
Words lead to things; a scale is more precise. —
Coarse speech, bad grammar, swearing, drinking, vice.
Our cold Northeaster's icy fetter clips
The native freedom of the Saxon lips;
See the brown peasant of the plastic South,
How all his passions play about his mouth!
With us, the feature that transmits the soul,
A frozen, passive, palsied breathing-hole.
The crampy shackles of the ploughboy's walk
Tie the small muscles when he strives to talk;
Not all the pumice of the polished town
Can smooth this roughness of the barnyard down;
Rich, honored, titled, he betrays his race

By this one mark, — he 's awkward in the face; —
Nature's rude impress, long before he knew
The sunny street that holds the sifted few.
It can't be helped, though, if we 're taken young,
We gain some freedom of the lips and tongue;
But school and college often try in vain
To break the padlock of our boyhood's chain:
One stubborn word will prove this axiom true, —
No quondam rustic can enunciate *view*.

A few brief stanzas may be well employed
To speak of errors we can all avoid.
Learning condemns beyond the reach of hope
The careless lips that speak of sŏap for sōap;
Her edict exiles from her fair abode
The clownish voice that utters rŏad for rōad:
Less stern to him who calls his cōat a cŏat,
And steers his bōat, believing it a bŏat,
She pardoned one, our classic city's boast,
Who said at Cambridge mŏst instead of mōst,
But knit her brows and stamped her angry foot
To hear a Teacher call a rōo̅t a rŏŏt.

Once more: speak clearly, if you speak at all;
Carve every word before you let it fall;
Don't, like a lecturer or dramatic star,
Try over-hard to roll the British R;
Do put your accents in the proper spot;
Don't, — let me beg you, — don't say "How?" for
"What?"
And when you stick on conversation's burs,
Don't strew your pathway with those dreadful *urs*.

From little matters let us pass to less,
And lightly touch the mysteries of DRESS;
The outward forms the inner man reveal, —
We guess the pulp before we cut the peel.

I leave the broadcloth, — coats and all the rest, —
The dangerous waistcoat, called by cockneys
"vest,"
The things named "pants" in certain documents,
A word not made for gentlemen, but "gents;"
One single precept might the whole condense:
Be sure your tailor is a man of sense;
But add a little care, a decent pride,
And always err upon the sober side.

Three pairs of boots one pair of feet demands,
If polished daily by the owner's hands;
If the dark menial's visit save from this,
Have twice the number, — for he 'll sometimes
miss.
One pair for critics of the nicer sex,
Close in the instep's clinging circumflex,
Long, narrow, light; the Gallic boot of love,
A kind of cross between a boot and glove.
Compact, but easy, strong, substantial, square,
Let native art compile the medium pair.
The third remains, and let your tasteful skill
Here show some relics of affection still;
Let no stiff cowhide, reeking from the tan,
No rough caoutchouc, no deformed brogan,
Disgrace the tapering outline of your feet,
Though yellow torrents gurgle through the street.

Wear seemly gloves ; not black, nor yet too light,
And least of all the pair that once was white ;
Let the dead party where you told your loves
Bury in peace its dead bouquets and gloves ;
Shave like the goat, if so your fancy bids,
But be a parent, — don't neglect your kids.

Have a good hat ; the secret of your looks
Lives with the beaver in Canadian brooks ;
Virtue may flourish in an old cravat,
But man and nature scorn the shocking hat.
Does beauty slight you from her gay abodes ?
Like bright Apollo, you must take to *Rhoades*, —
Mount the new castor, — ice itself will melt ;
Boots, gloves, may fail ; the hat is always felt !

Be shy of breastpins ; plain, well-ironed white,
With small pearl buttons, — two of them in sight, —
Is always genuine, while your gems may pass,
Though real diamonds, for ignoble glass.
But spurn those paltry Cisatlantic lies
That round his breast the shabby rustic ties ;
Breathe not the name profaned to hallow things
The indignant laundress blushes when she brings !

Our freeborn race, averse to every check,
Has tossed the yoke of Europe from its *neck ;*
From the green prairie to the sea-girt town,
The whole wide nation turns its collars down.
The stately neck is manhood's manliest part ;
It takes the life-blood freshest from the heart.

With short, curled ringlets close around it spread,
How light and strong it lifts the Grecian head!
Thine, fair Erechtheus of Minerva's wall;
Or thine, young athlete of the Louvre's hall,
Smooth as the pillar flashing in the sun
That filled the arena where thy wreaths were won,
Firm as the band that clasps the antlered spoil
Strained in the winding anaconda's coil!

I spare the contrast; it were only kind
To be a little, nay, intensely blind.
Choose for yourself: I know it cuts your ear;
I know the points will sometimes interfere;
I know that often, like the filial John,
Whom sleep surprised with half his drapery on,
You show your features to the astonished town
With one side standing and the other down; —
But, O, my friend! my favorite fellow-man!
If Nature made you on her modern plan,
Sooner than wander with your windpipe bare, —
The fruit of Eden ripening in the air, —
With that lean head-stalk, that protruding chin,
Wear standing collars, were they made of tin!
And have a neckcloth — by the throat of Jove! —
Cut from the funnel of a rusty stove!

The long-drawn lesson narrows to its close,
Chill, slender, slow, the dwindled current flows;
Tired of the ripples on its feeble springs,
Once more the Muse unfolds her upward wings.

Land of my birth, with this unhallowed tongue,
Thy hopes, thy dangers, I perchance had sung;

But who shall sing, in brutal disregard
Of all the essentials of the "native bard"?
Lake, sea, shore, prairie, forest, mountain, fall,
His eye omnivorous must devour them all;
The tallest summits and the broadest tides
His foot must compass with its giant strides,
Where Ocean thunders, where Missouri rolls,
And tread at once the tropics and the poles;
His food all forms of earth, fire, water, air,
His home all space, his birthplace everywhere.

Some grave compatriot, having seen perhaps
The pictured page that goes in Worcester's Maps,
And read in earnest what was said in jest,
"Who drives fat oxen" — please to add the rest, —
Sprung the odd notion that the poet's dreams
Grow in the ratio of his hills and streams;
And hence insisted that the aforesaid "bard,"
Pink of the future, fancy's pattern-card,
The babe of nature in the "giant West,"
Must be of course her biggest and her best.

Oh! when at length the expected bard shall come,
Land of our pride, to strike thine echoes dumb,
(And many a voice exclaims in prose and rhyme,
It 's getting late, and he 's behind his time,)
When all thy mountains clap their hands in joy,
And all thy cataracts thunder, "That 's the boy," —
Say if with him the reign of song shall end,
And Heaven declare its final dividend!

Be calm, dear brother! whose impassioned strain
Comes from an alley watered by a drain;
The little Mincio, dribbling to the Po,
Beats all the epics of the Hoang Ho;
If loved in earnest by the tuneful maid,
Don't mind their nonsense, — never be afraid!

The nurse of poets feeds her wingèd brood
By common firesides, on familiar food;
In a low hamlet, by a narrow stream,
Where bovine rustics used to doze and dream,
She filled young William's fiery fancy full,
While old John Shakespeare talked of beeves and wool!

No Alpine needle, with its climbing spire,
Brings down for mortals the Promethean fire,
If careless nature have forgot to frame
An altar worthy of the sacred flame.
Unblest by any save the goatherd's lines,
Mont Blanc rose soaring through his "sea of pines;"
In vain the rivers from their ice-caves flash;
No hymn salutes them but the Ranz des Vaches,
Till lazy Coleridge, by the morning's light,
Gazed for a moment on the fields of white,
And lo! the glaciers found at length a tongue,
Mont Blanc was vocal, and Chamouni sung!

Children of wealth or want, to each is given
One spot of green, and all the blue of heaven!
Enough if these their outward shows impart;
The rest is thine, — the scenery of the heart.

If passion's hectic in thy stanzas glow,
Thy heart's best life-blood ebbing as they flow;
If with thy verse thy strength and bloom distil,
Drained by the pulses of the fevered thrill;
If sound's sweet effluence polarize thy brain,
And thoughts turn crystals in thy fluid strain, —
Nor rolling ocean, nor the prairie's bloom,
Nor streaming cliffs, nor rayless cavern's gloom,
Need'st thou, young poet, to inform thy line;
Thy own broad signet stamps thy song divine!

Let others gaze where silvery streams are rolled,
And chase the rainbow for its cup of gold;
To thee all landscapes wear a heavenly dye,
Changed in the glance of thy prismatic eye;
Nature evoked thee in sublimer throes,
For thee her inmost Arethusa flows, —
The mighty mother's living depths are stirred, —
Thou art the starred Osiris of the herd!

A few brief lines; they touch on solemn chords,
And hearts may leap to hear their honest words;
Yet, ere the jarring bugle-blast is blown,
The softer lyre shall breathe its soothing tone.

New England! proudly may thy children claim
Their honored birthright by its humblest name!
Cold are thy skies, but, ever fresh and clear,
No rank malaria stains thine atmosphere;
No fungous weeds invade thy scanty soil,
Scarred by the ploughshares of unslumbering toil.
Long may the doctrines by thy sages taught,
Raised from the quarries where their sires have wrought,

Be like the granite of thy rock-ribbed land, —
As slow to rear, as obdurate to stand ;
And as the ice that leaves thy crystal mine
Chills the fierce alcohol in the Creole's wine,
So may the doctrines of thy sober school
Keep the hot theories of thy neighbors cool !

If ever, trampling on her ancient path,
Cankered by treachery or inflamed by wrath,
With smooth " Resolves " or with discordant cries,
The mad Briareus of disunion rise,
Chiefs of New England ! by your sires' renown,
Dash the red torches of the rebel down !
Flood his black hearthstone till its flames expire,
Though your old Sachem fanned his council-fire !

But if at last, her fading cycle run,
The tongue must forfeit what the arm has won,
Then rise, wild Ocean ! roll thy surging shock
Full on old Plymouth's desecrated rock !
Scale the proud shaft degenerate hands have hewn,
Where bleeding Valor stained the flowers of June !
Sweep in one tide her spires and turrets down,
And howl her dirge above Monadnock's crown !

List not the tale ; the Pilgrim's hallowed shore,
Though strewn with weeds, is granite at the core ;
Oh, rather trust that He who made her free
Will keep her true as long as faith shall be !
Farewell ! yet lingering through the destined hour,
Leave, sweet Enchantress, one memorial flower !

An Angel, floating o'er the waste of snow
That clad our Western desert, long ago,
(The same fair spirit who, unseen by day,
Shone as a star along the Mayflower's way,) —
Sent, the first herald of the Heavenly plan,
To choose on earth a resting-place for man, —
Tired with his flight along the unvaried field,
Turned to soar upwards, when his glance revealed
A calm, bright bay enclosed in rocky bounds,
And at its entrance stood three sister mounds.

The Angel spake: "This threefold hill shall be
The home of Arts, the nurse of Liberty!
One stately summit from its shaft shall pour
Its deep-red blaze along the darkened shore;
Emblem of thoughts that, kindling far and wide,
In danger's night shall be a nation's guide.
One swelling crest the citadel shall crown,
Its slanted bastions black with battle's frown,
And bid the sons that tread its scowling heights
Bare their strong arms for man and all his rights!
One silent steep along the northern wave
Shall hold the patriarch's and the hero's grave;
When fades the torch, when o'er the peaceful scene
The embattled fortress smiles in living green,
The cross of Faith, the anchor staff of Hope,
Shall stand eternal on its grassy slope;
There through all time shall faithful Memory tell,
'Here Virtue toiled, and Patriot Valor fell;
Thy free, proud fathers slumber at thy side;
Live as they lived, or perish as they died!'"

AN AFTER-DINNER POEM

(TERPSICHORE)

Read at the Annual Dinner of the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, August 24, 1843.

In narrowest girdle, O reluctant Muse,
In closest frock and Cinderella shoes,
Bound to the foot-lights for thy brief display,
One zephyr step, and then dissolve away!

Short is the space that gods and men can spare
To Song's twin brother when she is not there.
Let others water every lusty line,
As Homer's heroes did their purple wine;
Pierian revellers! Know in strains like these
The native juice, the real honest squeeze, —
Strains that, diluted to the twentieth power,
In yon grave temple might have filled an hour.
Small room for Fancy's many-chorded lyre,
For Wit's bright rockets with their trains of fire,
For Pathos, struggling vainly to surprise
The iron tutor's tear-denying eyes,
For Mirth, whose finger with delusive wile
Turns the grim key of many a rusty smile,
For Satire, emptying his corrosive flood
On hissing Folly's gas-exhaling brood,
The pun, the fun, the moral, and the joke,
The hit, the thrust, the pugilistic poke, —

Small space for these, so pressed by niggard Time,
Like that false matron, known to nursery rhyme, —
Insidious Morey, — scarce her tale begun,
Ere listening infants weep the story done.

Oh, had we room to rip the mighty bags
That Time, the harlequin, has stuffed with rags!
Grant us one moment to unloose the strings,
While the old graybeard shuts his leather wings.
But what a heap of motley trash appears
Crammed in the bundles of successive years!
As the lost rustic on some festal day
Stares through the concourse in its vast array, —
Where in one cake a throng of faces runs,
All stuck together like a sheet of buns, —
And throws the bait of some unheeded name,
Or shoots a wink with most uncertain aim,
So roams my vision, wandering over all,
And strives to choose, but knows not where to fall.

Skins of flayed authors, husks of dead reviews,
The turn-coat's clothes, the office-seeker's shoes,
Scraps from cold feasts, where conversation runs
Through mouldy toasts to oxidated puns,
And grating songs a listening crowd endures,
Rasped from the throats of bellowing amateurs;
Sermons, whose writers played such dangerous tricks
Their own heresiarchs called them heretics,
(Strange that one term such distant poles should link,
The Priestleyan's copper and the Puseyan's zinc);
Poems that shuffle with superfluous legs

A blindfold minuet over addled eggs,
Where all the syllables that end in èd,
Like old dragoons, have cuts across the head;
Essays so dark Champollion might despair
To guess what mummy of a thought was there,
Where our poor English, striped with foreign phrase,
Looks like a zebra in a parson's chaise;
Lectures that cut our dinners down to roots,
Or prove (by monkeys) men should stick to fruits, —
Delusive error, as at trifling charge
Professor Gripes will certify at large;
Mesmeric pamphlets, which to facts appeal,
Each fact as slippery as a fresh-caught eel;
And figured heads, whose hieroglyphs invite
To wandering knaves that discount fools at sight:
Such things as these, with heaps of unpaid bills,
And candy puffs and homœopathic pills,
And ancient bell-crowns with contracted rim,
And bonnets hideous with expanded brim,
And coats whose memory turns the sartor pale,
Their sequels tapering like a lizard's tale, —
How might we spread them to the smiling day,
And toss them, fluttering like the new-mown hay,
To laughter's light or sorrow's pitying shower,
Were these brief minutes lengthened to an hour.

The narrow moments fit like Sunday shoes, —
How vast the heap, how quickly must we choose!
A few small scraps from out his mountain mass
We snatch in haste, and let the vagrant pass.

This shrunken CRUST that Cerberus could not bite,
Stamped (in one corner) "Pickwick copyright,"
Kneaded by youngsters, raised by flattery's yeast,
Was once a loaf, and helped to make a feast.
He for whose sake the glittering show appears
Has sown the world with laughter and with tears,
And they whose welcome wets the bumper's brim
Have wit and wisdom, — for they all quote him.
So, many a tongue the evening hour prolongs
With spangled speeches, — let alone the songs;
Statesmen grow merry, lean attorneys laugh,
And weak teetotals warm to half and half,
And beardless Tullys, new to festive scenes,
Cut their first crop of youth's precocious greens,
And wits stand ready for impromptu claps,
With loaded barrels and percussion caps,
And Pathos, cantering through the minor keys,
Waves all her onions to the trembling breeze:
While the great Feasted views with silent glee
His scattered limbs in Yankee fricassee.

Sweet is the scene where genial friendship plays
The pleasing game of interchanging praise.
Self-love, grimalkin of the human heart,
Is ever pliant to the master's art;
Soothed with a word, she peacefully withdraws
And sheathes in velvet her obnoxious claws,
And thrills the hand that smooths her glossy fur
With the light tremor of her grateful purr.

But what sad music fills the quiet hall,
If on her back a feline rival fall!

And oh, what noises shake the tranquil house
If old Self-interest cheats her of a mouse!

Thou, O my country, hast thy foolish ways,
Too apt to purr at every stranger's praise;
But if the stranger touch thy modes or laws,
Off goes the velvet and out come the claws!
And thou, Illustrious! but too poorly paid
In toasts from Pickwick for thy great crusade,
Though, while the echoes labored with thy name,
The public trap denied thy little game,
Let other lips our jealous laws revile, —
The marble Talfourd or the rude Carlyle, —
But on thy lids, which Heaven forbids to close
Where'er the light of kindly nature glows,
Let not the dollars that a churl denies
Weigh like the shillings on a dead man's eyes!
Or, if thou wilt, be more discreetly blind,
Nor ask to see all wide extremes combined.
Not in our wastes the dainty blossoms smile
That crowd the gardens of thy scanty isle.
There white-cheeked Luxury weaves a thousand
charms;
Here sun-browned Labor swings his naked arms.
Long are the furrows he must trace between
The ocean's azure and the prairie's green;
Full many a blank his destined realm displays,
Yet sees the promise of his riper days:
Far through yon depths the panting engine moves,
His chariots ringing in their steel-shod grooves;
And Erie's naiad flings her diamond wave
O'er the wild sea-nymph in her distant cave!

While tasks like these employ his anxious hours,
What if his cornfields are not edged with flowers?
Though bright as silver the meridian beams
Shine through the crystal of thine English streams,
Turbid and dark the mighty wave is whirled
That drains our Andes and divides a world!

But lo! a PARCHMENT! Surely it would seem
The sculptured impress speaks of power supreme;
Some grave design the solemn page must claim
That shows so broadly an emblazoned name.
A sovereign's promise! Look, the lines afford
All Honor gives when Caution asks his word:
There sacred Faith has laid her snow-white hands,
And awful Justice knit her iron bands;
Yet every leaf is stained with treachery's dye,
And every letter crusted with a lie.
Alas! no treason has degraded yet
The Arab's salt, the Indian's calumet;
A simple rite, that bears the wanderer's pledge,
Blunts the keen shaft and turns the dagger's edge;
While jockeying senates stop to sign and seal,
And freeborn statesmen legislate to steal.
Rise, Europe, tottering with thine Atlas load,
Turn thy proud eye to Freedom's blest abode,
And round her forehead, wreathed with heavenly
flame,
Bind the dark garland of her daughter's shame!
Ye ocean clouds, that wrap the angry blast,
Coil her stained ensign round its haughty mast,
Or tear the fold that wears so foul a scar,
And drive a bolt through every blackened star!

Once more, — once only, — we must stop so soon:
What have we here? A GERMAN-SILVER SPOON;
A cheap utensil, which we often see
Used by the dabblers in æsthetic tea,
Of slender fabric, somewhat light and thin,
Made of mixed metal, chiefly lead and tin;
The bowl is shallow, and the handle small,
Marked in large letters with the name JEAN PAUL.
Small as it is, its powers are passing strange,
For all who use it show a wondrous change;
And first, a fact to make the barbers stare,
It beats Macassar for the growth of hair.
See those small youngsters whose expansive ears
Maternal kindness grazed with frequent shears;
Each bristling crop a dangling mass becomes,
And all the spoonies turn to Absaloms!
Nor this alone its magic power displays,
It alters strangely all their works and ways;
With uncouth words they tire their tender lungs,
The same bald phrases on their hundred tongues:
"Ever" "The Ages" in their page appear,
"Alway" the bedlamite is called a "Seer;"
On every leaf the "earnest" sage may scan,
Portentous bore! their "many-sided" man, —
A weak eclectic, groping vague and dim,
Whose every angle is a half-starved whim,
Blind as a mole and curious as a lynx,
Who rides a beetle, which he calls a "Sphinx."
And oh, what questions asked in clubfoot rhyme
Of Earth the tongueless and the deaf-mute Time!

Here babbling "Insight" shouts in Nature's ears
His last conundrum on the orbs and spheres;
There Self-inspection sucks its little thumb,
With "Whence am I?" and "Wherefore did I
come?"
Deluded infants! will they ever know
Some doubts must darken o'er the world below,
Though all the Platos of the nursery trail
Their "clouds of glory" at the go-cart's tail?
Oh might these couplets their attention claim
That gain their author the Philistine's name!
(A stubborn race, that, spurning foreign law,
Was much belabored with an ass's jaw.)

Melodious Laura! From the sad retreats
That hold thee, smothered with excess of sweets,
Shade of a shadow, spectre of a dream,
Glance thy wan eye across the Stygian stream!
The slipshod dreamer treads thy fragrant halls,
The sophist's cobwebs hang thy roseate walls,
And o'er the crotchets of thy jingling tunes
The bard of mystery scrawls his crooked "runes."
Yes, thou art gone, with all the tuneful hordes
That candied thoughts in amber-colored words,
And in the precincts of thy late abodes
The clattering verse-wright hammers Orphic odes.
Thou, soft as zephyr, wast content to fly
On the gilt pinions of a balmy sigh;
He, vast as Phœbus on his burning wheels,
Would stride through ether at Orion's heels.
Thy emblem, Laura, was a perfume-jar,
And thine, young Orpheus, is a pewter star.

The balance trembles, — be its verdict told
When the new jargon slumbers with the old!

Cease, playful goddess! From thine airy bound
Drop like a feather softly to the ground;
This light bolero grows a ticklish dance,
And there is mischief in thy kindling glance.
To-morrow bids thee, with rebuking frown,
Change thy gauze tunic for a home-made gown,
Too blest by fortune if the passing day
Adorn thy bosom with its frail bouquet,
But oh, still happier if the next forgets
Thy daring steps and dangerous pirouettes!

MEDICAL POEMS

THE MORNING VISIT

A SICK man's chamber, though it often boast
The grateful presence of a literal toast,
Can hardly claim, amidst its various wealth,
The right unchallenged to propose a health;
Yet though its tenant is denied the feast,
Friendship must launch his sentiment at least,
As prisoned damsels, locked from lovers' lips,
Toss them a kiss from off their fingers' tips.

The morning visit, — not till sickness falls
In the charmed circles of your own safe walls;
Till fever's throb and pain's relentless rack
Stretch you all helpless on your aching back;
Not till you play the patient in your turn,
The morning visit's mystery shall you learn.

'T is a small matter in your neighbor's case,
To charge your fee for showing him your face;
You skip up-stairs, inquire, inspect, and touch,
Prescribe, take leave, and off to twenty such.

But when at length, by fate's transferred decree,
The visitor becomes the visitee,

Oh, then, indeed, it pulls another string;
Your ox is gored, and that 's a different thing!
Your friend is sick: phlegmatic as a Turk,
You write your recipe and let it work;
Not yours to stand the shiver and the frown,
And sometimes worse, with which your draught
goes down.
Calm as a clock your knowing hand directs,
Rhei, jalapæ ana grana sex,
Or traces on some tender missive's back,
Scrupulos duos pulveris ipecac;
And leaves your patient to his qualms and gripes,
Cool as a sportsman banging at his snipes.
But change the time, the person, and the place,
And be yourself "the interesting case,"
You 'll gain some knowledge which it 's well to
learn;
In future practice it may serve your turn.
Leeches, for instance, — pleasing creatures quite;
Try them, — and bless you, — don't you find they
bite?
You raise a blister for the smallest cause,
But be yourself the sitter whom it draws,
And trust my statement, you will not deny
The worst of draughtsmen is your Spanish fly!
It 's mighty easy ordering when you please,
Infusi sennæ capiat uncias tres;
It 's mighty different when you quackle down
Your own three ounces of the liquid brown.
Pilula, pulvis, — pleasant words enough,
When other throats receive the shocking stuff;
But oh, what flattery can disguise the groan

That meets the gulp which sends it through your own!
Be gentle, then, though Art's unsparing rules
Give you the handling of her sharpest tools;
Use them not rashly, — sickness is enough;
Be always "ready," but be never "rough."

Of all the ills that suffering man endures,
The largest fraction liberal Nature cures;
Of those remaining, 't is the smallest part
Yields to the efforts of judicious Art;
But simple *Kindness*, kneeling by the bed
To shift the pillow for the sick man's head,
Give the fresh draught to cool the lips that burn,
Fan the hot brow, the weary frame to turn, —
Kindness, untutored by our grave M. D.'s,
But Nature's graduate, when she schools to please,
Wins back more sufferers with her voice and smile
Than all the trumpery in the druggist's pile.

Once more, be *quiet:* coming up the stair,
Don't be a plantigrade, a human bear,
But, stealing softly on the silent toe,
Reach the sick chamber ere you 're heard below.
Whatever changes there may greet your eyes,
Let not your looks proclaim the least surprise;
It 's not your business by your face to show
All that your patient does not want to know;
Nay, use your optics with considerate care,
And don't abuse your privilege to stare.
But if your eyes may probe him overmuch,
Beware still further how you rudely touch;

Don't clutch his carpus in your icy fist,
But warm your fingers ere you take the wrist.
If the poor victim needs must be percussed,
Don't make an anvil of his aching bust;
(Doctors exist within a hundred miles
Who thump a thorax as they 'd hammer piles;)
If you must listen to his doubtful chest,
Catch the essentials, and ignore the rest.
Spare him; the sufferer wants of you and art
A track to steer by, not a finished chart.
So of your questions: don't in mercy try
To pump your patient absolutely dry;
He 's not a mollusk squirming in a dish,
You 're not Agassiz, and he 's not a fish.

And last, not least, in each perplexing case,
Learn the sweet magic of a *cheerful face;*
Not always smiling, but at least serene,
When grief and anguish cloud the anxious scene.
Each look, each movement, every word and tone,
Should tell your patient you are all his own;
Not the mere artist, purchased to attend,
But the warm, ready, self-forgetting friend,
Whose genial visit in itself combines
The best of cordials, tonics, anodynes.

Such is the *visit* that from day to day
Sheds o'er my chamber its benignant ray.
I give his health, who never cared to claim
Her babbling homage from the tongue of Fame;
Unmoved by praise, he stands by all confest,
The truest, noblest, wisest, kindest, best.

1849.

THE TWO ARMIES

As Life's unending column pours,
Two marshalled hosts are seen, —
Two armies on the trampled shores
That Death flows black between.

One marches to the drum-beat's roll,
The wide-mouthed clarion's bray,
And bears upon a crimson scroll,
"Our glory is to slay."

One moves in silence by the stream,
With sad, yet watchful eyes,
Calm as the patient planet's gleam
That walks the clouded skies.

Along its front no sabres shine,
No blood-red pennons wave;
Its banner bears the single line,
"Our duty is to save."

For those no death-bed's lingering shade;
At Honor's trumpet-call,
With knitted brow and lifted blade
In Glory's arms they fall.

For these no clashing falchions bright,
No stirring battle-cry;
The bloodless stabber calls by night, —
Each answers, "Here am I!"

For those the sculptor's laurelled bust,
The builder's marble piles,
The anthems pealing o'er their dust
Through long cathedral aisles.

For these the blossom-sprinkled turf
That floods the lonely graves
When Spring rolls in her sea-green surf
In flowery-foaming waves.

Two paths lead upward from below,
And angels wait above,
Who count each burning life-drop's flow,
Each falling tear of Love.

Though from the Hero's bleeding breast
Her pulses Freedom drew,
Though the white lilies in her crest
Sprang from that scarlet dew, —

While Valor's haughty champions wait
Till all their scars are shown,
Love walks unchallenged through the gate,
To sit beside the Throne!

THE STETHOSCOPE SONG

A PROFESSIONAL BALLAD

THERE was a young man in Boston town,
He bought him a stethoscope nice and new,
All mounted and finished and polished down,
With an ivory cap and a stopper too.

It happened a spider within did crawl,
And spun him a web of ample size,
Wherein there chanced one day to fall
A couple of very imprudent flies.

The first was a bottle-fly, big and blue,
The second was smaller, and thin and long;
So there was a concert between the two,
Like an octave flute and a tavern gong.

Now being from Paris but recently,
This fine young man would show his skill;
And so they gave him, his hand to try,
A hospital patient extremely ill.

Some said that his *liver* was short of *bile*,
And some that his *heart* was over size,
While some kept arguing, all the while,
He was crammed with *tubercles* up to his eyes.

This fine young man then up stepped he,
And all the doctors made a pause;
Said he, The man must die, you see,
By the fifty-seventh of Louis's laws.

But since the case is a desperate one,
To explore his chest it may be well;
For if he should die and it were not done,
You know the *autopsy* would not tell.

Then out his stethoscope he took,
And on it placed his curious ear;

Mon Dieu! said he, with a knowing look,
Why, here is a sound that 's mighty queer!

The *bourdonnement* is very clear, —
Amphoric buzzing, as I 'm alive!
Five doctors took their turn to hear;
Amphoric buzzing, said all the five.

There 's *empyema* beyond a doubt;
We 'll plunge a *trocar* in his side.
The diagnosis was made out, —
They tapped the patient; so he died.

Now such as hate new-fashioned toys
Began to look extremely glum;
They said that *rattles* were made for boys,
And vowed that his *buzzing* was all a hum.

There was an old lady had long been sick,
And what was the matter none did know:
Her pulse was slow, though her tongue was quick;
To her this knowing youth must go.

So there the nice old lady sat,
With phials and boxes all in a row;
She asked the young doctor what he was at,
To thump her and tumble her ruffles so.

Now, when the stethoscope came out,
The flies began to buzz and whiz:
Oh ho! the matter is clear, no doubt;
An *aneurism* there plainly is.

The *bruit de râpe* and the *bruit de scie*
And the *bruit de diable* are all combined;
How happy Bouillaud would be,
If he a case like this could find!

Now, when the neighboring doctors found
A case so rare had been descried,
They every day her ribs did pound
In squads of twenty; so she died.

Then six young damsels, slight and frail,
Received this kind young doctor's cares;
They all were getting slim and pale,
And short of breath on mounting stairs.

They all made rhymes with "sighs" and "skies,"
And loathed their puddings and buttered rolls,
And dieted, much to their friends' surprise,
On pickles and pencils and chalk and coals.

So fast their little hearts did bound,
The frightened insects buzzed the more;
So over all their chests he found
The *râle sifflant* and the *râle sonore.*

He shook his head. There 's grave disease, —
I greatly fear you all must die;
A slight *post-mortem*, if you please,
Surviving friends would gratify.

The six young damsels wept aloud,
Which so prevailed on six young men

That each his honest love avowed,
Whereat they all got well again.

This poor young man was all aghast;
The price of stethoscopes came down;
And so he was reduced at last
To practise in a country town.

The doctors being very sore,
A stethoscope they did devise
That had a rammer to clear the bore,
With a knob at the end to kill the flies.

Now use your ears, all you that can,
But don't forget to mind your eyes,
Or you may be cheated, like this young man,
By a couple of silly, abnormal flies.

EXTRACTS FROM A MEDICAL POEM

THE STABILITY OF SCIENCE

THE feeble sea-birds, blinded in the storms,
On some tall lighthouse dash their little forms,
And the rude granite scatters for their pains
Those small deposits that were meant for brains.
Yet the proud fabric in the morning's sun
Stands all unconscious of the mischief done;
Still the red beacon pours its evening rays
For the lost pilot with as full a blaze, —
Nay, shines, all radiance, o'er the scattered fleet
Of gulls and boobies brainless at its feet.

I tell their fate, though courtesy disclaims
To call our kind by such ungentle names;
Yet, if your rashness bid you vainly dare,
Think of their doom, ye simple, and beware!
See where aloft its hoary forehead rears
The towering pride of twice a thousand years!
Far, far below the vast incumbent pile
Sleeps the gray rock from art's Ægean isle
Its massive courses, circling as they rise,
Swell from the waves to mingle with the skies;
There every quarry lends its marble spoil,
And clustering ages blend their common toil;
The Greek, the Roman, reared its ancient walls,
The silent Arab arched its mystic halls;
In that fair niche, by countless billows laved,
Trace the deep lines that Sydenham engraved;
On yon broad front that breasts the changing swell,
Mark where the ponderous sledge of Hunter fell;
By that square buttress look where Louis stands,
The stone yet warm from his uplifted hands;
And say, O Science, shall thy life-blood freeze,
When fluttering folly flaps on walls like these?

A PORTRAIT

Thoughtful in youth, but not austere in age;
Calm, but not cold, and cheerful though a sage;
Too true to flatter and too kind to sneer,
And only just when seemingly severe;
So gently blending courtesy and art
That wisdom's lips seemed borrowing friendship's heart.

Taught by the sorrows that his age had known
In others' trials to forget his own,
As hour by hour his lengthened day declined,
A sweeter radiance lingered o'er his mind.
Cold were the lips that spoke his early praise,
And hushed the voices of his morning days,
Yet the same accents dwelt on every tongue,
And love renewing kept him ever young.

A SENTIMENT

Ὁ βίος βραχύς, — life is but a song;
Ἡ τέχνη μακρή, — art is wondrous long;
Yet to the wise her paths are ever fair,
And Patience smiles, though Genius may despair.
Give us but knowledge, though by slow degrees,
And blend our toil with moments bright as these;
Let Friendship's accents cheer our doubtful way,
And Love's pure planet lend its guiding ray, —
Our tardy Art shall wear an angel's wings,
And life shall lengthen with the joy it brings!

A POEM

FOR THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AT NEW YORK, MAY 5, 1853

I HOLD a letter in my hand, —
A flattering letter, more 's the pity, —
By some contriving junto planned,
And signed *per order of Committee.*

It touches every tenderest spot, —
My patriotic predilections,
My well-known — something — don't ask what,—
My poor old songs, my kind affections.

They make a feast on Thursday next,
And hope to make the feasters merry;
They own they 're something more perplexed
For poets than for port and sherry.
They want the men of — (word torn out);
Our friends will come with anxious faces,
(To see our blankets off, no doubt,
And trot us out and show our paces.)

They hint that papers by the score
Are rather musty kind of rations, —
They don't exactly mean a bore,
But only trying to the patience;
That such as — you know who I mean —
Distinguished for their — what d' ye call 'em—
Should bring the dews of Hippocrene
To sprinkle on the faces solemn.

— The same old story: that 's the chaff
To catch the birds that sing the ditties;
Upon my soul, it makes me laugh
To read these letters from Committees!
They 're all *so* loving and *so* fair, —
All for *your* sake such kind compunction;
'T would save your carriage half its wear
To touch its wheels with such an unction!

Why, who am I, to lift me here
And beg such learned folk to listen,
To ask a smile, or coax a tear
Beneath these stoic lids to glisten?
As well might some arterial thread
Ask the whole frame to feel it gushing,
While throbbing fierce from heel to head
The vast aortic tide was rushing.

As well some hair-like nerve might strain
To set its special streamlet going,
While through the myriad-channelled brain
The burning flood of thought was flowing;
Or trembling fibre strive to keep
The springing haunches gathered shorter,
While the scourged racer, leap on leap,
Was stretching through the last hot quarter!

Ah me! you take the bud that came
Self-sown in your poor garden's borders,
And hand it to the stately dame
That florists breed for, all she orders.
She thanks you, — it was kindly meant, —
(A pale affair, not worth the keeping,) —
Good morning; and your bud is sent
To join the tea-leaves used for sweeping.

Not always so, kind hearts and true, —
For such I know are round me beating;
Is not the bud I offer you,
Fresh gathered for the hour of meeting,

Pale though its outer leaves may be,
  Rose-red in all its inner petals? —
Where the warm life we cannot see —
  The life of love that gave it — settles.

We meet from regions far away,
  Like rills from distant mountains streaming;
The sun is on Francisco's bay,
  O'er Chesapeake the lighthouse gleaming;
While summer girds the still bayou
  In chains of bloom, her bridal token,
Monadnock sees the sky grow blue,
  His crystal bracelet yet unbroken.

Yet Nature bears the selfsame heart
  Beneath her russet-mantled bosom
As where, with burning lips apart,
  She breathes and white magnolias blossom;
The selfsame founts her chalice fill
  With showery sunlight running over,
On fiery plain and frozen hill,
  On myrtle-beds and fields of clover.

I give you *Home!* its crossing lines
  United in one golden suture,
And showing every day that shines
  The present growing to the future, —
A flag that bears a hundred stars
  In one bright ring, with love for centre,
Fenced round with white and crimson bars
  No prowling treason dares to enter!

O brothers, home may be a word
To make affection's living treasure,
The wave an angel might have stirred,
A stagnant pool of selfish pleasure;
HOME! It is where the day-star springs
And where the evening sun reposes,
Where'er the eagle spreads his wings,
From northern pines to southern roses!

A SENTIMENT

A TRIPLE health to Friendship, Science, Art,
From heads and hands that own a common heart!
Each in its turn the others' willing slave,
Each in its season strong to heal and save.

Friendship's blind service, in the hour of need,
Wipes the pale face, and lets the victim bleed.
Science must stop to reason and explain;
ART claps his finger on the streaming vein.

But Art's brief memory fails the hand at last;
Then SCIENCE lifts the flambeau of the past.
When both their equal impotence deplore,
When Learning sighs, and Skill can do no more,
The tear of FRIENDSHIP pours its heavenly balm,
And soothes the pang no anodyne may calm!

May 1, 1855.

RIP VAN WINKLE, M. D.

AN AFTER-DINNER PRESCRIPTION TAKEN BY THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY, AT THEIR MEETING HELD MAY 25, 1870

CANTO FIRST

Old Rip Van Winkle had a grandson, Rip,
Of the paternal block a genuine chip, —
A lazy, sleepy, curious kind of chap;
He, like his grandsire, took a mighty nap,
Whereof the story I propose to tell
In two brief cantos, if you listen well.

The times were hard when Rip to manhood grew;
They always will be when there 's work to do.
He tried at farming, — found it rather slow, —
And then at teaching — what he did n't know;
Then took to hanging round the tavern bars,
To frequent toddies and long-nine cigars,
Till Dame Van Winkle, out of patience, vexed
With preaching homilies, having for their text
A mop, a broomstick, aught that might avail
To point a moral or adorn a tale,
Exclaimed, "I have it! Now, then, Mr. V.!
He 's good for *something*,— make him an M. D.!"

The die was cast; the youngster was content;
They packed his shirts and stockings, and he went.
How hard he studied it were vain to tell;
He drowsed through Wistar, nodded over Bell,

Slept sound with Cooper, snored aloud on Good;
Heard heaps of lectures, — doubtless understood, —
A constant listener, for he did not fail
To carve his name on every bench and rail.

Months grew to years; at last he counted three,
And Rip Van Winkle found himself M. D.
Illustrious title! in a gilded frame
He set the sheepskin with his Latin name,
RIPUM VAN WINKLUM, QUEM we — SCIMUS — know
IDONEUM ESSE — to do so and so.
He hired an office; soon its walls displayed
His new diploma and his stock in trade,
A mighty arsenal to subdue disease,
Of various names, whereof I mention these:
Lancets and bougies, great and little squirt,
Rhubarb and Senna, Snakeroot, Thoroughwort.
Ant. Tart., Vin. Colch., Pil. Cochiæ, and Black Drop,
Tinctures of Opium, Gentian, Henbane, Hop,
Pulv. Ipecacuanhæ, which for lack
Of breath to utter men call Ipecac,
Camphor and Kino, Turpentine, Tolu,
Cubebs, "Copeevy," Vitriol, — white and blue, —
Fennel and Flaxseed, Slippery Elm and Squill,
And roots of Sassafras, and "Sassaf'rill,"
Brandy, — for colics, — Pinkroot, death on worms, —
Valerian, calmer of hysteric squirms,
Musk, Assafœtida, the resinous gum
Named from its odor, — well, it does smell some, —
Jalap, that works not wisely, but too well,
Ten pounds of Bark and six of Calomel.

For outward griefs he had an ample store,
Some twenty jars and gallipots, or more:
Ceratum simplex — housewives oft compile
The same at home, and call it "wax and ile;"
Unguentum resinosum — change its name,
The "drawing salve" of many an ancient dame;
Argenti Nitras, also Spanish flies,
Whose virtue makes the water-bladders rise —
(Some say that spread upon a toper's skin
They draw no water, only rum or gin);
Leeches, sweet vermin! don't they charm the sick?
And Sticking-plaster — how it hates to stick!
Emplastrum Ferri — ditto *Picis*, Pitch;
Washes and Powders, Brimstone for the — which,
Scabies or *Psora*, is thy chosen name
Since Hahnemann's goose-quill scratched thee into fame,
Proved thee the source of every nameless ill,
Whose sole specific is a moonshine pill,
Till saucy Science, with a quiet grin,
Held up the Acarus, crawling on a pin?
— Mountains have labored and have brought forth mice:
The Dutchman's theory hatched a brood of — twice
I've wellnigh said them — words unfitting quite
For these fair precincts and for ears polite.

The surest foot may chance at last to slip,
And so at length it proved with Doctor Rip.
One full-sized bottle stood upon the shelf,
Which held the medicine that he took himself;
Whate'er the reason, it must be confessed
He filled that bottle oftener than the rest:

What drug it held I don't presume to know —
The gilded label said " Elixir Pro."

One day the Doctor found the bottle full,
And, being thirsty, took a vigorous pull,
Put back the " Elixir " where 't was always found,
And had old Dobbin saddled and brought round.
— You know those old-time rhubarb-colored nags
That carried Doctors and their saddle-bags;
Sagacious beasts! they stopped at every place
Where blinds were shut — knew every patient's case —
Looked up and thought — The baby 's in a fit —
That won't last long — he 'll soon be through with it;
But shook their heads before the knockered door
Where some old lady told the story o'er
Whose endless stream of tribulation flows
For gastric griefs and peristaltic woes.

What jack-o'-lantern led him from his way,
And where it led him, it were hard to say;
Enough that wandering many a weary mile
Through paths the mountain sheep trod single file,
O'ercome by feelings such as patients know
Who dose too freely with " Elixir Pro.,"
He tumbl— dismounted, slightly in a heap,
And lay, promiscuous, lapped in balmy sleep.

Night followed night, and day succeeded day,
But snoring still the slumbering Doctor lay.
Poor Dobbin, starving, thought upon his stall,
And straggled homeward, saddle-bags and all.

The village people hunted all around,
But Rip was missing, — never could be found.
" Drownded," they guessed ; — for more than half
a year
The pouts and eels *did* taste uncommon queer ;
Some said of apple-brandy — other some
Found a strong flavor of New England rum.

Why can't a fellow hear the fine things said
About a fellow when a fellow 's dead ?
The best of doctors — so the press declared —
A public blessing while his life was spared,
True to his country, bounteous to the poor,
In all things temperate, sober, just, and pure ;
The best of husbands ! echoed Mrs. Van,
And set her cap to catch another man.

So ends this Canto — if it 's *quantum suff.*,
We 'll just stop here and say we 've had enough,
And leave poor Rip to sleep for thirty years ;
I grind the organ — if you lend your ears
To hear my second Canto, after that
We 'll send around the monkey with the hat.

CANTO SECOND

So thirty years had passed — but not a word
In all that time of Rip was ever heard ;
The world wagged on — it never does go back —
The widow Van was now the widow Mac —
France was an Empire — Andrew J. was dead,
And Abraham L. was reigning in his stead.
Four murderous years had passed in savage strife,
Yet still the rebel held his bloody knife.

— At last one morning — who forgets the day
When the black cloud of war dissolved away? —
The joyous tidings spread o'er land and sea,
Rebellion done for! Grant has captured Lee!
Up every flagstaff sprang the Stars and Stripes —
Out rushed the Extras wild with mammoth types —
Down went the laborer's hod, the school-boy's book —
"Hooraw!" he cried, "the rebel army 's took!"
Ah! what a time! the folks all mad with joy:
Each fond, pale mother thinking of her boy;
Old gray-haired fathers meeting — "Have — you — heard?"
And then a choke — and not another word;
Sisters all smiling — maidens, not less dear,
In trembling poise between a smile and tear;
Poor Bridget thinking how she 'll stuff the plums
In that big cake for Johnny when he comes;
Cripples afoot; rheumatics on the jump;
Old girls so loving they could hug the pump;
Guns going bang! from every fort and ship;
They banged so loud at last they wakened Rip.

I spare the picture, how a man appears
Who 's been asleep a score or two of years;
You all have seen it to perfection done
By Joe Van Wink— I mean Rip Jefferson.
Well, so it was; old Rip at last came back,
Claimed his old wife — the present widow Mac —
Had his old sign regilded, and began
To practise physic on the same old plan.

Some weeks went by — it was not long to wait —
And "please to call" grew frequent on the slate.
He had, in fact, an ancient, mildewed air,
A long gray beard, a plenteous lack of hair, —
The musty look that always recommends
Your good old Doctor to his ailing friends.
— Talk of your science! after all is said
There 's nothing like a bare and shiny head;
Age lends the graces that are sure to please;
Folks want their Doctors mouldy, like their cheese.

So Rip began to look at people's tongues
And thump their briskets (called it "sound their lungs"),
Brushed up his knowledge smartly as he could,
Read in old Cullen and in Doctor Good.
The town was healthy; for a month or two
He gave the sexton little work to do.

About the time when dog-day heats begin,
The summer's usual maladies set in;
With autumn evenings dysentery came,
And dusky typhoid lit his smouldering flame;
The blacksmith ailed, the carpenter was down,
And half the children sickened in the town.
The sexton's face grew shorter than before —
The sexton's wife a brand-new bonnet wore —
Things looked quite serious — Death had got a grip
On old and young, in spite of Doctor Rip.

And now the Squire was taken with a chill —
Wife gave "hot-drops" — at night an Indian pill;
Next morning, feverish — bedtime, getting worse —

Out of his head — began to rave and curse;
The Doctor sent for - - double quick he came:
Ant. Tart. gran. duo, and repeat the same
If no et cetera. Third day — nothing new;
Percussed his thorax till 't was black and blue —
Lung-fever threatening — something of the sort —
Out with the lancet — let him bleed — a quart —
Ten leeches next — then blisters to his side;
Ten grains of calomel; just then he died.

The Deacon next required the Doctor's care —
Took cold by sitting in a draught of air —
Pains in the back, but what the matter is
Not quite so clear, — wife calls it "rheumatiz."
Rubs back with flannel — gives him something hot —
"Ah!" says the Deacon, "that goes *nigh* the spot."
Next day a *rigor* — "Run, my little man,
And say the Deacon sends for Doctor Van."
The Doctor came — percussion as before,
Thumping and banging till his ribs were sore —
"Right side the flattest" — then more vigorous raps —
"Fever — that 's certain — pleurisy, perhaps.
A quart of blood will ease the pain, no doubt,
Ten leeches next will help to suck it out,
Then clap a blister on the painful part —
But first two grains of *Antimonium Tart.*
Last with a dose of cleansing calomel
Unload the portal system — (that sounds well!)"

But when the selfsame remedies were tried,
As all the village knew, the Squire had died;

The neighbors hinted. This will never do;
He 's killed the Squire — he 'll kill the Deacon too."

Now when a doctor's patients are perplexed,
A *consultation* comes in order next —
You know what that is? In a certain place
Meet certain doctors to discuss a case
And other matters, such as weather, crops,
Potatoes, pumpkins, lager-beer, and hops.
For what 's the use? — there 's little to be said,
Nine times in ten your man 's as good as dead;
At best a talk (the secret to disclose)
Where three men guess and *sometimes* one man knows.

The counsel summoned came without delay —
Young Doctor Green and shrewd old Doctor Gray —
They heard the story — "Bleed!" says Doctor Green,
"That 's downright murder! cut his throat, you mean!
Leeches! the reptiles! Why, for pity's sake,
Not try an adder or a rattlesnake?
Blisters! Why bless you, they 're against the law —
It 's rank assault and battery if they draw!
Tartrate of Antimony! shade of Luke,
Stomachs turn pale at thought of such rebuke!
The portal system! What 's the man about?
Unload your nonsense! Calomel 's played out!
You 've been asleep — you 'd better sleep away
Till some one calls you."

"Stop!" says Doctor Gray —
"The story is you slept for thirty years;
With brother Green, I own that it appears
You must have slumbered most amazing sound;
But sleep once more till thirty years come round,
You 'll find the lancet in its honored place,
Leeches and blisters rescued from disgrace,
Your drugs redeemed from fashion's passing scorn,
And counted safe to give to babes unborn."

Poor sleepy Rip, M. M. S. S., M. D.,
A puzzled, serious, saddened man was he;
Home from the Deacon's house he plodded slow
And filled one bumper of "Elixir Pro."
"Good-by," he faltered, "Mrs. Van, my dear!
I 'm going to sleep, but wake me once a year;
I don't like bleaching in the frost and dew,
I 'll take the barn, if all the same to you.
Just once a year — remember! no mistake!
Cry, 'Rip Van Winkle! time for you to wake!'
Watch for the week in May when laylocks blow,
For then the Doctors meet, and I must go."

Just once a year the Doctor's worthy dame
Goes to the barn and shouts her husband's name;
"Come, Rip Van Winkle!" (giving him a shake)
"Rip! Rip Van Winkle! time for you to wake!
Laylocks in blossom! 't is the month of May —
The Doctors' meeting is this blessed day,
And come what will, you know I heard you swear
You 'd never miss it, but be always there!"

And so it is, as every year comes round
Old Rip Van Winkle here is always found.
You 'll quickly know him by his mildewed air,
The hayseed sprinkled through his scanty hair,
The lichens growing on his rusty suit —
I 've seen a toadstool sprouting on his boot —
— Who says I lie? Does any man presume? —
Toadstool? No matter — call it a mushroom.
Where is his seat? He moves it every year;
But look, you 'll find him, — he is always here, —
Perhaps you 'll track him by a whiff you know —
A certain flavor of " Elixir Pro."

Now, then, I give you — as you seem to think
We can give toasts without a drop to drink —
Health to the mighty sleeper, — long live he!
Our brother Rip, M. M. S. S., M. D.!

SONGS IN MANY KEYS

1849–1861

PROLOGUE

The piping of our slender, peaceful reeds
Whispers uncared for while the trumpets bray;
Song is thin air; our hearts' exulting play
Beats time but to the tread of marching deeds,
Following the mighty van that Freedom leads,
Her glorious standard flaming to the day!
The crimsoned pavement where a hero bleeds
Breathes nobler lessons than the poet's lay.
Strong arms, broad breasts, brave hearts, are better worth
Than strains that sing the ravished echoes dumb.
Hark! 't is the loud reverberating drum
Rolls o'er the prairied West, the rock-bound North:
The myriad-handed Future stretches forth
Its shadowy palms. Behold, we come, — we come!

Turn o'er these idle leaves. Such toys as these
Were not unsought for, as, in languid dreams,
We lay beside our lotus-feeding streams,
And nursed our fancies in forgetful ease.
It matters little if they pall or please,
Dropping untimely, while the sudden gleams

Glare from the mustering clouds whose blackness
seems
Too swollen to hold its lightning from the trees.
Yet, in some lull of passion, when at last
These calm revolving moons that come and go —
Turning our months to years, they creep so slow —
Have brought us rest, the not unwelcome past
May flutter to thee through these leaflets, cast
On the wild winds that all around us blow.

May 1, 1861.

AGNES

The story of Sir Harry Frankland and Agnes Surriage is told in the ballad with a very strict adhesion to the facts. These were obtained from information afforded me by the Rev. Mr. Webster, of Hopkinton, in company with whom I visited the Frankland Mansion in that town, then standing; from a very interesting Memoir, by the Rev. Elias Nason, of Medford; and from the manuscript diary of Sir Harry, or more properly Sir Charles Henry Frankland, now in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

At the time of the visit referred to, old Julia was living, and on our return we called at the house where she resided.[1] Her account is little more than paraphrased in the poem. If the incidents are treated with a certain liberality at the close of the fifth part, the essential fact that Agnes rescued Sir Harry from the ruins after the earthquake, and their subsequent marriage as related, may be accepted as literal truth. So with regard to most of the trifling details which are given; they are taken from the record.

It is greatly to be regretted that the Frankland Mansion no longer exists. It was accidentally burned on the 23d of January, 1858, a year or two after the first sketch of this ballad was written. A visit to it was like stepping out of the century into the years before the Revolution. A new house, similar in plan and arrangements to the old one, has been built upon its site, and the terraces, the clump of box, and the lilacs doubtless remain to bear witness to the truth of this story.

[1] She was living June 10, 1861, when this ballad was published.

The story, which I have told literally in rhyme, has been made the subject of a carefully studied and interesting romance by Mr. E. L. Bynner.

PART FIRST

THE KNIGHT

THE tale I tell is gospel true,
As all the bookmen know,
And pilgrims who have strayed to view
The wrecks still left to show.

The old, old story, — fair, and young,
And fond, — and not too wise, —
That matrons tell, with sharpened tongue,
To maids with downcast eyes.

Ah! maidens err and matrons warn
Beneath the coldest sky;
Love lurks amid the tasselled corn
As in the bearded rye!

But who would dream our sober sires
Had learned the old world's ways,
And warmed their hearths with lawless fires
In Shirley's homespun days?

'T is like some poet's pictured trance
His idle rhymes recite, —
This old New England-born romance
Of Agnes and the Knight;

Yet, known to all the country round,
Their home is standing still,

Between Wachusett's lonely mound
And Shawmut's threefold hill.

One hour we rumble on the rail,
One half-hour guide the rein,
We reach at last, o'er hill and dale,
The village on the plain.

With blackening wall and mossy roof,
With stained and warping floor,
A stately mansion stands aloof
And bars its haughty door.

This lowlier portal may be tried,
That breaks the gable wall;
And lo! with arches opening wide,
Sir Harry Frankland's hall!

'T was in the second George's day
They sought the forest shade,
The knotted trunks they cleared away,
The massive beams they laid,

They piled the rock-hewn chimney tall,
They smoothed the terraced ground,
They reared the marble-pillared wall
That fenced the mansion round.

Far stretched beyond the village bound
The Master's broad domain;
With page and valet, horse and hound,
He kept a goodly train.

And, all the midland county through,
The ploughman stopped to gaze
Whene'er his chariot swept in view
Behind the shining bays,

With mute obeisance, grave and slow,
Repaid by nod polite, —
For such the way with high and low
Till after Concord fight.

Nor less to courtly circles known
That graced the three-hilled town
With far-off splendors of the Throne,
And glimmerings from the Crown;

Wise Phipps, who held the seals of state
For Shirley over sea;
Brave Knowles, whose press-gang moved of late
The King Street mob's decree;

And judges grave, and colonels grand,
Fair dames and stately men,
The mighty people of the land,
The "World" of there and then.

'T was strange no Chloe's "beauteous Form,"
And "Eyes' cœlestial Blew,"
This Strephon of the West could warm,
No Nymph his Heart subdue!

Perchance he wooed as gallants use,
Whom fleeting loves enchain,

But still unfettered, free to choose,
Would brook no bridle-rein.

He saw the fairest of the fair,
But smiled alike on all;
No band his roving foot might snare,
No ring his hand enthrall.

PART SECOND

THE MAIDEN

Why seeks the knight that rocky cape
Beyond the Bay of Lynn?
What chance his wayward course may shape
To reach its village inn?

No story tells; whate'er we guess,
The past lies deaf and still,
But Fate, who rules to blight or bless,
Can lead us where she will.

Make way! Sir Harry's coach and four,
And liveried grooms that ride!
They cross the ferry, touch the shore
On Winnisimmet's side.

They hear the wash on Chelsea Beach,—
The level marsh they pass,
Where miles on miles the desert reach
Is rough with bitter grass.

The shining horses foam and pant,
And now the smells begin
Of fishy Swampscott, salt Nahant,
And leather-scented Lynn.

Next, on their left, the slender spires
And glittering vanes that crown
The home of Salem's frugal sires,
The old, witch-haunted town.

So onward, o'er the rugged way
That runs through rocks and sand,
Showered by the tempest-driven spray,
From bays on either hand,

That shut between their outstretched arms
The crews of Marblehead,
The lords of ocean's watery farms,
Who plough the waves for bread.

At last the ancient inn appears,
The spreading elm below,
Whose flapping sign these fifty years
Has seesawed to and fro.

How fair the azure fields in sight
Before the low-browed inn!
The tumbling billows fringe with light
The crescent shore of Lynn;

Nahant thrusts outward through the waves
Her arm of yellow sand,

And breaks the roaring surge that braves
The gauntlet on her hand;

With eddying whirl the waters lock
Yon treeless mound forlorn,
The sharp-winged sea-fowl's breeding-rock,
That fronts the Spouting Horn;

Then free the white-sailed shallops glide,
And wide the ocean smiles,
Till, shoreward bent, his streams divide
The two bare Misery Isles.

The master's silent signal stays
The wearied cavalcade;
The coachman reins his smoking bays
Beneath the elm-tree's shade.

A gathering on the village green!
The cocked-hats crowd to see,
On legs in ancient velveteen,
With buckles at the knee.

A clustering round the tavern-door
Of square-toed village boys,
Still wearing, as their grandsires wore,
The old-world corduroys!

A scampering at the "Fountain" inn,—
A rush of great and small,—
With hurrying servants' mingled din
And screaming matron's call!

Poor Agnes! with her work half done
They caught her unaware;
As, humbly, like a praying nun,
She knelt upon the stair;

Bent o'er the steps, with lowliest mien
She knelt, but not to pray, —
Her little hands must keep them clean,
And wash their stains away.

A foot, an ankle, bare and white,
Her girlish shapes betrayed, —
"Ha! Nymphs and Graces!" spoke the Knight;
"Look up, my beauteous Maid!"

She turned, — a reddening rose in bud,
Its calyx half withdrawn, —
Her cheek on fire with damasked blood
Of girlhood's glowing dawn!

He searched her features through and through,
As royal lovers look
On lowly maidens, when they woo
Without the ring and book.

"Come hither, Fair one! Here, my Sweet!
Nay, prithee, look not down!
Take this to shoe those little feet," —
He tossed a silver crown.

A sudden paleness struck her brow, —
A swifter blush succeeds;

It burns her cheek ; it kindles now
Beneath her golden beads.

She flitted, but the glittering eye
Still sought the lovely face.
Who was she? What, and whence? and why
Doomed to such menial place?

A skipper's daughter, — so they said, —
Left orphan by the gale
That cost the fleet of Marblehead
And Gloucester thirty sail.

Ah! many a lonely home is found
Along the Essex shore,
That cheered its goodman outward bound,
And sees his face no more!

"Not so," the matron whispered, — "sure
No orphan girl is she, —
The Surriage folk are deadly poor
Since Edward left the sea,

"And Mary, with her growing brood,
Has work enough to do
To find the children clothes and food
With Thomas, John, and Hugh.

"This girl of Mary's, growing tall, —
(Just turned her sixteenth year,) —
To earn her bread and help them all,
Would work as housemaid here."

So Agnes, with her golden beads,
And naught beside as dower,
Grew at the wayside with the weeds,
Herself a garden-flower.

'T was strange, 't was sad, — so fresh, so fair!
Thus Pity's voice began.
Such grace! an angel's shape and air!
The half-heard whisper ran.

For eyes could see in George's time,
As now in later days,
And lips could shape, in prose and rhyme,
The honeyed breath of praise.

No time to woo! The train must go
Long ere the sun is down,
To reach, before the night-winds blow,
The many-steepled town.

'T is midnight, — street and square are still;
Dark roll the whispering waves
That lap the piers beneath the hill
Ridged thick with ancient graves.

Ah, gentle sleep! thy hand will smooth
The weary couch of pain,
When all thy poppies fail to soothe
The lover's throbbing brain!

'T is morn, — the orange-mantled sun
Breaks through the fading gray,

And long and loud the Castle gun
Peals o'er the glistening bay.

"Thank God 't is day!" With eager eye
He hails the morning shine: —
"If art can win, or gold can buy,
The maiden shall be mine!"

PART THIRD

THE CONQUEST

"Who saw this hussy when she came?
What is the wench, and who?"
They whisper. "*Agnes* — is her name?
Pray what has she to do?"

The housemaids parley at the gate,
The scullions on the stair,
And in the footmen's grave debate
The butler deigns to share.

Black Dinah, stolen when a child,
And sold on Boston pier,
Grown up in service, petted, spoiled,
Speaks in the coachman's ear:

"What, all this household at his will?
And all are yet too few?
More servants, and more servants still, —
This pert young madam too!"

"*Servant!* fine servant!" laughed aloud
The man of coach and steeds;
"She looks too fair, she steps too proud,
This girl with golden beads!

"I tell you, you may fret and frown,
And call her what you choose,
You 'll find my Lady in her gown,
Your Mistress in her shoes!"

Ah, gentle maidens, free from blame,
God grant you never know
The little whisper, loud with shame,
That makes the world your foe!

Why tell the lordly flatterer's art,
That won the maiden's ear, —
The fluttering of the frightened heart,
The blush, the smile, the tear?

Alas! it were the saddening tale
That every language knows, —
The wooing wind, the yielding sail,
The sunbeam and the rose.

And now the gown of sober stuff
Has changed to fair brocade,
With broidered hem, and hanging cuff,
And flower of silken braid;

And clasped around her blanching wrist
A jewelled bracelet shines,

Her flowing tresses' massive twist
A glittering net confines;

And mingling with their truant wave
A fretted chain is hung;
But ah! the gift her mother gave, —
Its beads are all unstrung!

Her place is at the master's board,
Where none disputes her claim;
She walks beside the mansion's lord,
His bride in all but name.

The busy tongues have ceased to talk,
Or speak in softened tone,
So gracious in her daily walk
The angel light has shown.

No want that kindness may relieve
Assails her heart in vain,
The lifting of a ragged sleeve
Will check her palfrey's rein.

A thoughtful calm, a quiet grace
In every movement shown,
Reveal her moulded for the place
She may not call her own.

And, save that on her youthful brow
There broods a shadowy care,
No matron sealed with holy vow
In all the land so fair!

PART FOURTH

THE RESCUE

A ship comes foaming up the bay,
Along the pier she glides;
Before her furrow melts away,
A courier mounts and rides.

"Haste, Haste, post Haste!" the letters bear;
"Sir Harry Frankland, These."
Sad news to tell the loving pair!
The knight must cross the seas.

"Alas! we part!" — the lips that spoke
Lost all their rosy red,
As when a crystal cup is broke,
And all its wine is shed.

"Nay, droop not thus, — where'er," he cried,
"I go by land or sea,
My love, my life, my joy, my pride,
Thy place is still by me!"

Through town and city, far and wide,
Their wandering feet have strayed,
From Alpine lake to ocean tide,
And cold Sierra's shade.

At length they see the waters gleam
Amid the fragrant bowers
Where Lisbon mirrors in the stream
Her belt of ancient towers.

Red is the orange on its bough,
To-morrow's sun shall fling
O'er Cintra's hazel-shaded brow
The flush of April's wing.

The streets are loud with noisy mirth,
They dance on every green;
The morning's dial marks the birth
Of proud Braganza's queen.

At eve beneath their pictured dome
The gilded courtiers throng;
The broad moidores have cheated Rome
Of all her lords of song.

Ah! Lisbon dreams not of the day —
Pleased with her painted scenes —
When all her towers shall slide away
As now these canvas screens!

The spring has passed, the summer fled,
And yet they linger still,
Though autumn's rustling leaves have spread
The flank of Cintra's hill.

The town has learned their Saxon name,
And touched their English gold,
Nor tale of doubt nor hint of blame
From over sea is told.

Three hours the first November dawn
Has climbed with feeble ray

Through mists like heavy curtains drawn
Before the darkened day.

How still the muffled echoes sleep!
Hark! hark! a hollow sound, —
A noise like chariots rumbling deep
Beneath the solid ground.

The channel lifts, the water slides
And bares its bar of sand,
Anon a mountain billow strides
And crashes o'er the land.

The turrets lean, the steeples reel
Like masts on ocean's swell,
And clash a long discordant peal,
The death-doomed city's knell.

The pavement bursts, the earth upheaves
Beneath the staggering town!
The turrets crack — the castle cleaves —
The spires come rushing down.

Around, the lurid mountains glow
With strange unearthly gleams;
While black abysses gape below,
Then close in jagged seams.

The earth has folded like a wave,
And thrice a thousand score,
Clasped, shroudless, in their closing grave,
The sun shall see no more!

And all is over. Street and square
In ruined heaps are piled;
Ah! where is she, so frail, so fair,
Amid the tumult wild?

Unscathed, she treads the wreck-piled street,
Whose narrow gaps afford
A pathway for her bleeding feet,
To seek her absent lord.

A temple's broken walls arrest
Her wild and wandering eyes;
Beneath its shattered portal pressed,
Her lord unconscious lies.

The power that living hearts obey
Shall lifeless blocks withstand?
Love led her footsteps where he lay, —
Love nerves her woman's hand:

One cry, — the marble shaft she grasps, —
Up heaves the ponderous stone: —
He breathes, — her fainting form he clasps, —
Her life has bought his own!

PART FIFTH

THE REWARD

How like the starless night of death
Our being's brief eclipse,
When faltering heart and failing breath
Have bleached the fading lips!

She lives! What guerdon shall repay
His debt of ransomed life?
One word can charm all wrongs away, —
The sacred name of WIFE!

The love that won her girlish charms
Must shield her matron fame,
And write beneath the Frankland arms
The village beauty's name.

Go, call the priest! no vain delay
Shall dim the sacred ring!
Who knows what change the passing day,
The fleeting hour, may bring?

Before the holy altar bent,
There kneels a goodly pair;
A stately man, of high descent,
A woman, passing fair.

No jewels lend the blinding sheen
That meaner beauty needs,
But on her bosom heaves unseen
A string of golden beads.

The vow is spoke, — the prayer is said, —
And with a gentle pride
The Lady Agnes lifts her head,
Sir Harry Frankland's bride.

No more her faithful heart shall bear
Those griefs so meekly borne, —

The passing sneer, the freezing stare,
The icy look of scorn;

No more the blue-eyed English dames
Their haughty lips shall curl,
Whene'er a hissing whisper names
The poor New England girl.

But stay! — his mother's haughty brow, —
The pride of ancient race, —
Will plighted faith, and holy vow,
Win back her fond embrace?

Too well she knew the saddening tale
Of love no vow had blest,
That turned his blushing honors pale
And stained his knightly crest.

They seek his Northern home, — alas:
He goes alone before; —
His own dear Agnes may not pass
The proud, ancestral door.

He stood before the stately dame;
He spoke; she calmly heard,
But not to pity, nor to blame;
She breathed no single word.

He told his love, — her faith betrayed;
She heard with tearless eyes;
Could she forgive the erring maid?
She stared in cold surprise.

How fond her heart, he told, — how true;
The haughty eyelids fell; —
The kindly deeds she loved to do;
She murmured, "It is well."

But when he told that fearful day,
And how her feet were led
To where entombed in life he lay,
The breathing with the dead,

And how she bruised her tender breasts
Against the crushing stone,
That still the strong-armed clown protests
No man can lift alone, —

Oh! then the frozen spring was broke;
By turns she wept and smiled; —
"Sweet Agnes!" so the mother spoke,
"God bless my angel child!

"She saved thee from the jaws of death, —
'T is thine to right her wrongs;
I tell thee, — I, who gave thee breath, —
To her thy life belongs!"

Thus Agnes won her noble name,
Her lawless lover's hand;
The lowly maiden so became
A lady in the land!

PART SIXTH

CONCLUSION

The tale is done; it little needs
To track their after ways,
And string again the golden beads
Of love's uncounted days.

They leave the fair ancestral isle
For bleak New England's shore;
How gracious is the courtly smile
Of all who frowned before!

Again through Lisbon's orange bowers
They watch the river's gleam,
And shudder as her shadowy towers
Shake in the trembling stream.

Fate parts at length the fondest pair;
His cheek, alas! grows pale;
The breast that trampling death could spare
His noiseless shafts assail.

He longs to change the heaven of blue
For England's clouded sky, —
To breathe the air his boyhood knew;
He seeks them but to die.

Hard by the terraced hillside town,
Where healing streamlets run,

Still sparkling with their old renown, —
The "Waters of the Sun," —

The Lady Agnes raised the stone
That marks his honored grave,
And there Sir Harry sleeps alone
By Wiltshire Avon's wave.

The home of early love was dear;
She sought its peaceful shade,
And kept her state for many a year,
With none to make afraid.

At last the evil days were come
That saw the red cross fall;
She hears the rebels' rattling drum, —
Farewell to Frankland Hall!

I tell you, as my tale began,
The hall is standing still;
And you, kind listener, maid or man,
May see it if you will.

The box is glistening huge and green,
Like trees the lilacs grow,
Three elms high-arching still are seen,
And one lies stretched below.

The hangings, rough with velvet flowers,
Flap on the latticed wall;
And o'er the mossy ridge-pole towers
The rock-hewn chimney tall.

The doors on mighty hinges clash
With massive bolt and bar,
The heavy English-moulded sash
Scarce can the night-winds jar.

Behold the chosen room he sought
Alone, to fast and pray,
Each year, as chill November brought
The dismal earthquake day.

There hung the rapier blade he wore,
Bent in its flattened sheath ;
The coat the shrieking woman tore
Caught in her clenching teeth ; —

The coat with tarnished silver lace
She snapped at as she slid,
And down upon her death-white face
Crashed the huge coffin's lid.

A graded terrace yet remains ;
If on its turf you stand
And look along the wooded plains
That stretch on either hand,

The broken forest walls define
A dim, receding view,
Where, on the far horizon's line,
He cut his vista through.

If further story you shall crave,
Or ask for living proof,

Go see old Julia, born a slave
Beneath Sir Harry's roof.

She told me half that I have told,
And she remembers well
The mansion as it looked of old
Before its glories fell; —

The box, when round the terraced square
Its glossy wall was drawn;
The climbing vines, the snow-balls fair,
The roses on the lawn.

And Julia says, with truthful look
Stamped on her wrinkled face,
That in her own black hands she took
The coat with silver lace.

And you may hold the story light,
Or, if you like, believe;
But there it was, the woman's bite, —
A mouthful from the sleeve.

Now go your ways; — I need not tell
The moral of my rhyme;
But, youths and maidens, ponder well
This tale of olden time!

THE PLOUGHMAN

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERKSHIRE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, OCTOBER 4, 1849

CLEAR the brown path, to meet his coulter's gleam!
Lo! on he comes, behind his smoking team,
With toil's bright dew-drops on his sunburnt brow,
The lord of earth, the hero of the plough!

First in the field before the reddening sun,
Last in the shadows when the day is done,
Line after line, along the bursting sod,
Marks the broad acres where his feet have trod;
Still, where he treads, the stubborn clods divide,
The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide;
Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,
Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves;
Up the steep hillside, where the laboring train
Slants the long track that scores the level plain;
Through the moist valley, clogged with oozing clay,
The patient convoy breaks its destined way;
At every turn the loosening chains resound,
The swinging ploughshare circles glistening round,
Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,
And wearied hands unbind the panting steers.

These are the hands whose sturdy labor brings
The peasant's food, the golden pomp of kings;
This is the page, whose letters shall be seen
Changed by the sun to words of living green;
This is the scholar, whose immortal pen

Spells the first lesson hunger taught to men ;
These are the lines which heaven-commanded Toil
Shows on his deed, — the charter of the soil !

O gracious Mother, whose benignant breast
Wakes us to life, and lulls us all to rest,
How thy sweet features, kind to every clime,
Mock with their smile the wrinkled front of time !
We stain thy flowers, — they blossom o'er the dead ;
We rend thy bosom, and it gives us bread ;
O'er the red field that trampling strife has torn,
Waves the green plumage of thy tasselled corn ;
Our maddening conflicts scar thy fairest plain,
Still thy soft answer is the growing grain.
Yet, O our Mother, while uncounted charms
Steal round our hearts in thine embracing arms,
Let not our virtues in thy love decay,
And thy fond sweetness waste our strength away.

No ! by these hills, whose banners now displayed
In blazing cohorts Autumn has arrayed ;
By yon twin summits, on whose splintery crests
The tossing hemlocks hold the eagles' nests ;
By these fair plains the mountain circle screens,
And feeds with streamlets from its dark ravines, —
True to their home, these faithful arms shall toil
To crown with peace their own untainted soil ;
And, true to God, to freedom, to mankind,
If her chained bandogs Faction shall unbind,
These stately forms, that bending even now
Bowed their strong manhood to the humble plough,

Shall rise erect, the guardians of the land,
The same stern iron in the same right hand,
Till o'er their hills the shouts of triumph run,
The sword has rescued what the ploughshare won!

SPRING

WINTER is past; the heart of Nature warms
Beneath the wrecks of unresisted storms;
Doubtful at first, suspected more than seen,
The southern slopes are fringed with tender green;
On sheltered banks, beneath the dripping eaves,
Spring's earliest nurslings spread their glowing leaves,
Bright with the hues from wider pictures won,
White, azure, golden, — drift, or sky, or sun, —
The snowdrop, bearing on her patient breast
The frozen trophy torn from Winter's crest:
The violet, gazing on the arch of blue
Till her own iris wears its deepened hue;
The spendthrift crocus, bursting through the mould
Naked and shivering with his cup of gold.
Swelled with new life, the darkening elm on high
Prints her thick buds against the spotted sky;
On all her boughs the stately chestnut cleaves
The gummy shroud that wraps her embryo leaves;
The house-fly, stealing from his narrow grave,
Drugged with the opiate that November gave,
Beats with faint wing against the sunny pane,
Or crawls, tenacious, o'er its lucid plain;
From shaded chinks of lichen-crusted walls,
In languid curves, the gliding serpent crawls;

The bog's green harper, thawing from his sleep,
Twangs a hoarse note and tries a shortened leap;
On floating rails that face the softening noons
The still shy turtles range their dark platoons,
Or, toiling aimless o'er the mellowing fields,
Trail through the grass their tessellated shields.

At last young April, ever frail and fair,
Wooed by her playmate with the golden hair,
Chased to the margin of receding floods
O'er the soft meadows starred with opening buds,
In tears and blushes sighs herself away,
And hides her cheek beneath the flowers of May.

Then the proud tulip lights her beacon blaze,
Her clustering curls the hyacinth displays;
O'er her tall blades the crested fleur-de-lis,
Like blue-eyed Pallas, towers erect and free;
With yellower flames the lengthened sunshine glows,
And love lays bare the passion-breathing rose;
Queen of the lake, along its reedy verge
The rival lily hastens to emerge,
Her snowy shoulders glistening as she strips,
Till morn is sultan of her parted lips.

Then bursts the song from every leafy glade,
The yielding season's bridal serenade;
Then flash the wings returning Summer calls
Through the deep arches of her forest halls, —
The bluebird, breathing from his azure plumes
The fragrance borrowed where the myrtle blooms;
The thrush, poor wanderer, dropping meekly down,

Clad in his remnant of autumnal brown;
The oriole, drifting like a flake of fire
Rent by a whirlwind from a blazing spire.
The robin, jerking his spasmodic throat,
Repeats, imperious, his *staccato* note;
The crack-brained bobolink courts his crazy mate,
Poised on a bulrush tipsy with his weight;
Nay, in his cage the lone canary sings,
Feels the soft air, and spreads his idle wings.

Why dream I here within these caging walls,
Deaf to her voice, while blooming Nature calls;
Peering and gazing with insatiate looks
Through blinding lenses, or in wearying books?
Off, gloomy spectres of the shrivelled past!
Fly with the leaves that fill the autumn blast!
Ye imps of Science, whose relentless chains
Lock the warm tides within these living veins,
Close your dim cavern, while its captive strays
Dazzled and giddy in the morning's blaze!

THE STUDY

Yet in the darksome crypt I left so late,
Whose only altar is its rusted grate, —
Sepulchral, rayless, joyless as it seems,
Shamed by the glare of May's refulgent beams, —
While the dim seasons dragged their shrouded train,
Its paler splendors were not quite in vain.
From these dull bars the cheerful firelight's glow

Streamed through the casement o'er the spectral
snow;
Here, while the night-wind wreaked its frantic will
On the loose ocean and the rock-bound hill,
Rent the cracked topsail from its quivering yard,
And rived the oak a thousand storms had scarred,
Fenced by these walls the peaceful taper shone,
Nor felt a breath to slant its trembling cone.

Not all unblest the mild interior scene
When the red curtain spread its falling screen;
O'er some light task the lonely hours were past,
And the long evening only flew too fast;
Or the wide chair its leathern arms would lend
In genial welcome to some easy friend,
Stretched on its bosom with relaxing nerves,
Slow moulding, plastic, to its hollow curves;
Perchance indulging, if of generous creed,
In brave Sir Walter's dream-compelling weed.
Or, happier still, the evening hour would bring
To the round table its expected ring,
And while the punch-bowl's sounding depths were
stirred, —
Its silver cherubs smiling as they heard, —
Our hearts would open, as at evening's hour
The close-sealed primrose frees its hidden flower.

Such the warm life this dim retreat has known,
Not quite deserted when its guests were flown;
Nay, filled with friends, an unobtrusive set,
Guiltless of calls and cards and etiquette,
Ready to answer, never known to ask,
Claiming no service, prompt for every task.

On those dark shelves no housewife hand profanes,
O'er his mute files the monarch folio reigns;
A mingled race, the wreck of chance and time,
That talk all tongues and breathe of every clime,
Each knows his place, and each may claim his part
In some quaint corner of his master's heart.
This old Decretal, won from Kloss's hoards,
Thick-leaved, brass-cornered, ribbed with oaken boards,
Stands the gray patriarch of the graver rows,
Its fourth ripe century narrowing to its close;
Not daily conned, but glorious still to view,
With glistening letters wrought in red and blue.
There towers Stagira's all-embracing sage,
The Aldine anchor on his opening page;
There sleep the births of Plato's heavenly mind,
In yon dark tomb by jealous clasps confined,
"Olim e libris" (dare I call it mine?)
Of Yale's grave Head and Killingworth's divine!
In those square sheets the songs of Maro fill
The silvery types of smooth-leaved Baskerville;
High over all, in close, compact array,
Their classic wealth the Elzevirs display.
In lower regions of the sacred space
Range the dense volumes of a humbler race;
There grim chirurgeons all their mysteries teach,
In spectral pictures, or in crabbed speech;
Harvey and Haller, fresh from Nature's page,
Shoulder the dreamers of an earlier age,
Lully and Geber, and the learned crew
That loved to talk of all they could not do.

Why count the rest, — those names of later days
That many love, and all agree to praise, —
Or point the titles, where a glance may read
The dangerous lines of party or of creed?
Too well, perchance, the chosen list would show
What few may care and none can claim to know.
Each has his features, whose exterior seal
A brush may copy, or a sunbeam steal;
Go to his study, — on the nearest shelf
Stands the mosaic portrait of himself.

What though for months the tranquil dust descends,
Whitening the heads of these mine ancient friends,
While the damp offspring of the modern press
Flaunts on my table with its pictured dress;
Not less I love each dull familiar face,
Nor less should miss it from the appointed place;
I snatch the book, along whose burning leaves
His scarlet web our wild romancer weaves,
Yet, while proud Hester's fiery pangs I share,
My old MAGNALIA must be standing *there!*

THE BELLS

WHEN o'er the street the morning peal is flung
From yon tall belfry with the brazen tongue,
Its wide vibrations, wafted by the gale,
To each far listener tell a different tale.
The sexton, stooping to the quivering floor
Till the great caldron spills its brassy roar,

Whirls the hot axle, counting, one by one,
Each dull concussion, till his task is done.
Toil's patient daughter, when the welcome note
Clangs through the silence from the steeple's throat,
Streams, a white unit, to the checkered street,
Demure, but guessing whom she soon shall meet;
The bell, responsive to her secret flame,
With every note repeats her lover's name.
The lover, tenant of the neighboring lane,
Sighing, and fearing lest he sigh in vain,
Hears the stern accents, as they come and go,
Their only burden one despairing No!
Ocean's rough child, whom many a shore has known
Ere homeward breezes swept him to his own,
Starts at the echo as it circles round,
A thousand memories kindling with the sound;
The early favorite's unforgotten charms,
Whose blue initials stain his tawny arms;
His first farewell, the flapping canvas spread,
The seaward streamers crackling overhead,
His kind, pale mother, not ashamed to weep
Her first-born's bridal with the haggard deep,
While the brave father stood with tearless eye,
Smiling and choking with his last good-by.

'T is but a wave, whose spreading circle beats,
With the same impulse, every nerve it meets,
Yet who shall count the varied shapes that ride
On the round surge of that aerial tide!

O child of earth! If floating sounds like these
Steal from thyself their power to wound or please,
If here or there thy changing will inclines,
As the bright zodiac shifts its rolling signs,
Look at thy heart, and when its depths are known,
Then try thy brother's, judging by thine own,
But keep thy wisdom to the narrower range,
While its own standards are the sport of change,
Nor count us rebels when we disobey
The passing breath that holds thy passion's sway.

NON-RESISTANCE

Perhaps too far in these considerate days
Has patience carried her submissive ways;
Wisdom has taught us to be calm and meek,
To take one blow, and turn the other cheek;
It is not written what a man shall do,
If the rude caitiff smite the other too!

Land of our fathers, in thine hour of need
God help thee, guarded by the passive creed!
As the lone pilgrim trusts to beads and cowl,
When through the forest rings the gray wolf's howl;
As the deep galleon trusts her gilded prow
When the black corsair slants athwart her bow;
As the poor pheasant, with his peaceful mien,
Trusts to his feathers, shining golden-green,
When the dark plumage with the crimson beak

Has rustled shadowy from its splintered peak, —
So trust thy friends, whose babbling tongues would charm
The lifted sabre from thy foeman's arm,
Thy torches ready for the answering peal
From bellowing fort and thunder-freighted keel!

THE MORAL BULLY

Yon whey-faced brother, who delights to wear
A weedy flux of ill-conditioned hair,
Seems of the sort that in a crowded place
One elbows freely into smallest space;
A timid creature, lax of knee and hip,
Whom small disturbance whitens round the lip;
One of those harmless spectacled machines,
The Holy-Week of Protestants convenes;
Whom school-boys question if their walk transcends
The last advices of maternal friends;
Whom John, obedient to his master's sign,
Conducts, laborious, up to *ninety-nine*,
While Peter, glistening with luxurious scorn,
Husks his white ivories like an ear of corn;
Dark in the brow and bilious in the cheek,
Whose yellowish linen flowers but once a week,
Conspicuous, annual, in their threadbare suits,
And the laced high-lows which they call their boots,
Well mayst thou *shun* that dingy front severe,
But him, O stranger, him thou canst not *fear!*

Be slow to judge, and slower to despise,
Man of broad shoulders and heroic size!
The tiger, writhing from the boa's rings,
Drops at the fountain where the cobra stings.
In that lean phantom, whose extended glove
Points to the text of universal love,
Behold the master that can tame thee down
To crouch, the vassal of his Sunday frown;
His velvet throat against thy corded wrist,
His loosened tongue against thy doubled fist!

The Moral Bully, though he never swears,
Nor kicks intruders down his entry stairs,
Though meekness plants his backward-sloping hat,
And non-resistance ties his white cravat,
Though his black broadcloth glories to be seen
In the same plight with Shylock's gaberdine,
Hugs the same passion to his narrow breast
That heaves the cuirass on the trooper's chest,
Hears the same hell-hounds yelling in his rear
That chase from port the maddened buccaneer,
Feels the same comfort while his acrid words
Turn the sweet milk of kindness into curds,
Or with grim logic prove, beyond debate,
That all we love is worthiest of our hate,
As the scarred ruffian of the pirate's deck,
When his long swivel rakes the staggering wreck!

Heaven keep us all! Is every rascal clown
Whose arm is stronger free to knock us down?
Has every scarecrow, whose cachectic soul
Seems fresh from Bedlam, airing on parole,

Who, though he carries but a doubtful trace
Of angel visits on his hungry face,
From lack of marrow or the coins to pay,
Has dodged some vices in a shabby way,
The right to stick us with his cutthroat terms,
And bait his homilies with his brother worms?

THE MIND'S DIET

No life worth naming ever comes to good
If always nourished on the selfsame food;
The creeping mite may live so if he please,
And feed on Stilton till he turns to cheese,
But cool Magendie proves beyond a doubt,
If mammals try it, that their eyes drop out.

No reasoning natures find it safe to feed,
For their sole diet, on a single creed;
It spoils their eyeballs while it spares their tongues,
And starves the heart to feed the noisy lungs.

When the first larvæ on the elm are seen,
The crawling wretches, like its leaves, are green;
Ere chill October shakes the latest down,
They, like the foliage, change their tint to brown;
On the blue flower a bluer flower you spy,
You stretch to pluck it — 't is a butterfly;
The flattened tree-toads so resemble bark,
They 're hard to find as Ethiops in the dark;
The woodcock, stiffening to fictitious mud,
Cheats the young sportsman thirsting for his blood;

So by long living on a single lie,
Nay, on one truth, will creatures get its dye;
Red, yellow, green, they take their subject's hue, —
Except when squabbling turns them black and blue!

OUR LIMITATIONS

We trust and fear, we question and believe,
From life's dark threads a trembling faith to weave,
Frail as the web that misty night has spun,
Whose dew-gemmed awnings glitter in the sun.
While the calm centuries spell their lessons out,
Each truth we conquer spreads the realm of doubt;
When Sinai's summit was Jehovah's throne,
The chosen Prophet knew his voice alone;
When Pilate's hall that awful question heard,
The Heavenly Captive answered not a word.

Eternal Truth! beyond our hopes and fears
Sweep the vast orbits of thy myriad spheres!
From age to age, while History carves sublime
On her waste rock the flaming curves of time,
How the wild swayings of our planet show
That worlds unseen surround the world we know.

THE OLD PLAYER

The curtain rose; in thunders long and loud
The galleries rung; the veteran actor bowed.
In flaming line the telltales of the stage
Showed on his brow the autograph of age;
Pale, hueless waves amid his clustered hair,
And umbered shadows, prints of toil and care;
Round the wide circle glanced his vacant eye, —
He strove to speak, — his voice was but a sigh.

Year after year had seen its short-lived race
Flit past the scenes and others take their place;
Yet the old prompter watched his accents still,
His name still flaunted on the evening's bill.
Heroes, the monarchs of the scenic floor,
Had died in earnest and were heard no more;
Beauties, whose cheeks such roseate bloom o'er-
spread
They faced the footlights in unborrowed red,
Had faded slowly through successive shades
To gray duennas, foils of younger maids;
Sweet voices lost the melting tones that start
With Southern throbs the sturdy Saxon heart,
While fresh sopranos shook the painted sky
With their long, breathless, quivering locust-cry.
Yet there he stood, — the man of other days,
In the clear present's full, unsparing blaze,
As on the oak a faded leaf that clings
While a new April spreads its burnished wings.

How bright yon rows that soared in triple tier,
Their central sun the flashing chandelier!
How dim the eye that sought with doubtful aim
Some friendly smile it still might dare to claim!
How fresh these hearts! his own how worn and cold!
Such the sad thoughts that long-drawn sigh had told.

No word yet faltered on his trembling tongue;
Again, again, the crashing galleries rung.
As the old guardsman at the bugle's blast
Hears in its strain the echoes of the past,
So, as the plaudits rolled and thundered round,
A life of memories startled at the sound.

He lived again, — the page of earliest days, —
Days of small fee and parsimonious praise;
Then lithe young Romeo — hark that silvered tone,
From those smooth lips — alas! they were his own.
Then the bronzed Moor, with all his love and woe,
Told his strange tale of midnight melting snow;
And dark-plumed Hamlet, with his cloak and blade,
Looked on the royal ghost, himself a shade.
All in one flash, his youthful memories came,
Traced in bright hues of evanescent flame,
As the spent swimmer's in the lifelong dream,
While the last bubble rises through the stream.

Call him not old, whose visionary brain
Holds o'er the past its undivided reign.
For him in vain the envious seasons roll
Who bears eternal summer in his soul.

If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,
Spring with her birds, or children at their play,
Or maiden's smile, or heavenly dream of art,
Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart,
Turn to the record where his years are told, —
Count his gray hairs, — they cannot make him old!
What magic power has changed the faded mime?
One breath of memory on the dust of time.
As the last window in the buttressed wall
Of some gray minster tottering to its fall,
Though to the passing crowd its hues are spread,
A dull mosaic, yellow, green, and red,
Viewed from within, a radiant glory shows
When through its pictured screen the sunlight flows,
And kneeling pilgrims on its storied pane
See angels glow in every shapeless stain;
So streamed the vision through his sunken eye,
Clad in the splendors of his morning sky.
All the wild hopes his eager boyhood knew,
All the young fancies riper years proved true,
The sweet, low-whispered words, the winning glance
From queens of song, from Houris of the dance,
Wealth's lavish gift, and Flattery's soothing phrase,
And Beauty's silence when her blush was praise,
And melting Pride, her lashes wet with tears,
Triumphs and banquets, wreaths and crowns and cheers,
Pangs of wild joy that perish on the tongue,
And all that poets dream, but leave unsung!

In every heart some viewless founts are fed
From far-off hillsides where the dews were shed;

On the worn features of the weariest face
Some youthful memory leaves its hidden trace,
As in old gardens left by exiled kings
The marble basins tell of hidden springs,
But, gray with dust, and overgrown with weeds,
Their choking jets the passer little heeds,
Till time's revenges break their seals away,
And, clad in rainbow light, the waters play.

Good night, fond dreamer! let the curtain fall:
The world 's a stage, and we are players all.
A strange rehearsal! Kings without their crowns,
And threadbare lords, and jewel-wearing clowns,
Speak the vain words that mock their throbbing hearts,
As Want, stern prompter! spells them out their parts.
The tinselled hero whom we praise and pay
Is twice an actor in a twofold play.
We smile at children when a painted screen
Seems to their simple eyes a real scene;
Ask the poor hireling, who has left his throne
To seek the cheerless home he calls his own,
Which of his double lives most real seems,
The world of solid fact or scenic dreams?
Canvas, or clouds, — the footlights, or the spheres,—
The play of two short hours, or seventy years?
Dream on! Though Heaven may woo our open eyes,
Through their closed lids we look on fairer skies;
Truth is for other worlds, and hope for this;
The cheating future lends the present's bliss;

Life is a running shade, with fettered hands,
That chases phantoms over shifting sands;
Death a still spectre on a marble seat,
With ever clutching palms and shackled feet;
The airy shapes that mock life's slender chain,
The flying joys he strives to clasp in vain,
Death only grasps; to live is to pursue, —
Dream on! there 's nothing but illusion true!

A POEM

DEDICATION OF THE PITTSFIELD CEMETERY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1850

Angel of Death! extend thy silent reign!
Stretch thy dark sceptre o'er this new domain!
No sable car along the winding road
Has borne to earth its unresisting load;
No sudden mound has risen yet to show
Where the pale slumberer folds his arms below;
No marble gleams to bid his memory live
In the brief lines that hurrying Time can give;
Yet, O Destroyer! from thy shrouded throne
Look on our gift; this realm is all thine own!

Fair is the scene; its sweetness oft beguiled
From their dim paths the children of the wild;
The dark-haired maiden loved its grassy dells,
The feathered warrior claimed its wooded swells,
Still on its slopes the ploughman's ridges show
The pointed flints that left his fatal bow,

Chipped with rough art and slow barbarian toil, —
Last of his wrecks that strews the alien soil!
Here spread the fields that heaped their ripened store
Till the brown arms of Labor held no more;
The scythe's broad meadow with its dusky blush;
The sickle's harvest with its velvet flush;
The green-haired maize, her silken tresses laid,
In soft luxuriance, on her harsh brocade;
The gourd that swells beneath her tossing plume;
The coarser wheat that rolls in lakes of bloom, —
Its coral stems and milk-white flowers alive
With the wide murmurs of the scattered hive;
Here glowed the apple with the pencilled streak
Of morning painted on its southern cheek;
The pear's long necklace strung with golden drops,
Arched, like the banian, o'er its pillared props;
Here crept the growths that paid the laborer's care
With the cheap luxuries wealth consents to spare;
Here sprang the healing herbs which could not save
The hand that reared them from the neighboring grave.

Yet all its varied charms, forever free
From task and tribute, Labor yields to thee:
No more, when April sheds her fitful rain,
The sower's hand shall cast its flying grain;
No more, when Autumn strews the flaming leaves,
The reaper's band shall gird its yellow sheaves;
For thee alike the circling seasons flow
Till the first blossoms heave the latest snow.
In the stiff clod below the whirling drifts,
In the loose soil the springing herbage lifts,

In the hot dust beneath the parching weeds,
Life's withering flower shall drop its shrivelled seeds;
Its germ entranced in thy unbreathing sleep
Till what thou sowest mightier angels reap!

Spirit of Beauty! let thy graces blend
With loveliest Nature all that Art can lend.
Come from the bowers where Summer's life-blood flows
Through the red lips of June's half-open rose,
Dressed in bright hues, the loving sunshine's dower;
For tranquil Nature owns no mourning flower.
Come from the forest where the beech's screen
Bars the fierce noonbeam with its flakes of green;
Stay the rude axe that bares the shadowy plains,
Stanch the deep wound that dries the maple's veins.
Come with the stream whose silver-braided rills
Fling their unclasping bracelets from the hills,
Till in one gleam, beneath the forest's wings,
Melts the white glitter of a hundred springs.
Come from the steeps where look majestic forth
From their twin thrones the Giants of the North
On the huge shapes, that, crouching at their knees,
Stretch their broad shoulders, rough with shaggy trees.
Through the wide waste of ether, not in vain,
Their softened gaze shall reach our distant plain;
There, while the mourner turns his aching eyes
On the blue mounds that print the bluer skies,
Nature shall whisper that the fading view
Of mightiest grief may wear a heavenly hue.

Cherub of Wisdom! let thy marble page
Leave its sad lesson, new to every age;
Teach us to live, not grudging every breath
To the chill winds that waft us on to death,
But ruling calmly every pulse it warms,
And tempering gently every word it forms.
Seraph of Love! in heaven's adoring zone,
Nearest of all around the central throne,
While with soft hands the pillowed turf we spread
That soon shall hold us in its dreamless bed,
With the low whisper, — Who shall first be laid
In the dark chamber's yet unbroken shade? —
Let thy sweet radiance shine rekindled here,
And all we cherish grow more truly dear.
Here in the gates of Death's o'erhanging vault,
Oh, teach us kindness for our brother's fault:
Lay all our wrongs beneath this peaceful sod,
And lead our hearts to Mercy and its God.

Father of all! in Death's relentless claim
We read thy mercy by its sterner name;
In the bright flower that decks the solemn bier,
We see thy glory in its narrowed sphere;
In the deep lessons that affliction draws,
We trace the curves of thy encircling laws;
In the long sigh that sets our spirits free,
We own the love that calls us back to Thee!

Through the hushed street, along the silent plain,
The spectral future leads its mourning train,
Dark with the shadows of uncounted bands,
Where man's white lips and woman's wringing
hands

Track the still burden, rolling slow before,
That love and kindness can protect no more;
The smiling babe that, called to mortal strife,
Shuts its meek eyes and drops its little life;
The drooping child who prays in vain to live,
And pleads for help its parent cannot give;
The pride of beauty stricken in its flower;
The strength of manhood broken in an hour;
Age in its weakness, bowed by toil and care,
Traced in sad lines beneath its silvered hair.

The sun shall set, and heaven's resplendent spheres
Gild the smooth turf unhallowed yet by tears,
But ah! how soon the evening stars will shed
Their sleepless light around the slumbering dead!

Take them, O Father, in immortal trust!
Ashes to ashes, dust to kindred dust,
Till the last angel rolls the stone away,
And a new morning brings eternal day!

TO GOVERNOR SWAIN

Dear Governor, if my skiff might brave
The winds that lift the ocean wave,
The mountain stream that loops and swerves
Through my broad meadow's channelled curves
Should waft me on from bound to bound
To where the River weds the Sound,
The Sound should give me to the Sea,
That to the Bay, the Bay to thee.

It may not be ; too long the track
To follow down or struggle back.
The sun has set on fair Naushon
Long ere my western blaze is gone ;
The ocean disk is rolling dark
In shadows round your swinging bark,
While yet the yellow sunset fills
The stream that scarfs my spruce-clad hills ;
The day-star wakes your island deer
Long ere my barnyard chanticleer ;
Your mists are soaring in the blue
While mine are sparks of glittering dew.

It may not be ; oh, would it might,
Could I live o'er that glowing night !
What golden hours would come to life,
What goodly feats of peaceful strife, —
Such jests, that, drained of every joke,
The very bank of language broke, —
Such deeds, that Laughter nearly died
With stitches in his belted side ;
While Time, caught fast in pleasure's chain,
His double goblet snapped in twain,
And stood with half in either hand, —
Both brimming full, — but not of sand !

It may not be ; I strive in vain
To break my slender household chain, —
Three pairs of little clasping hands,
One voice, that whispers, not commands.
Even while my spirit flies away,
My gentle jailers murmur nay ;

All shapes of elemental wrath
They raise along my threatened path;
The storm grows black, the waters rise,
The mountains mingle with the skies,
The mad tornado scoops the ground,
The midnight robber prowls around, —
Thus, kissing every limb they tie,
They draw a knot and heave a sigh,
Till, fairly netted in the toil,
My feet are rooted to the soil.
Only the soaring wish is free! —
And that, dear Governor, flies to thee!

PITTSFIELD, 1851.

TO AN ENGLISH FRIEND

THE seed that wasteful autumn cast
To waver on its stormy blast,
Long o'er the wintry desert tost,
Its living germ has never lost.
Dropped by the weary tempest's wing,
It feels the kindling ray of spring,
And, starting from its dream of death,
Pours on the air its perfumed breath.

So, parted by the rolling flood,
The love that springs from common blood
Needs but a single sunlit hour
Of mingling smiles to bud and flower;
Unharmed its slumbering life has flown,
From shore to shore, from zone to zone,

Where summer's falling roses stain
The tepid waves of Pontchartrain,
Or where the lichen creeps below
Katahdin's wreaths of whirling snow.

Though fiery sun and stiffening cold
May change the fair ancestral mould,
No winter chills, no summer drains
The life-blood drawn from English veins,
Still bearing wheresoe'er it flows
The love that with its fountain rose,
Unchanged by space, unwronged by time,
From age to age, from clime to clime!

1852.

AFTER A LECTURE ON WORDSWORTH

Come, spread your wings, as I spread mine,
And leave the crowded hall
For where the eyes of twilight shine
O'er evening's western wall.

These are the pleasant Berkshire hills,
Each with its leafy crown;
Hark! from their sides a thousand rills
Come singing sweetly down.

A thousand rills; they leap and shine,
Strained through the shadowy nooks,
Till, clasped in many a gathering twine,
They swell a hundred brooks.

A hundred brooks, and still they run
With ripple, shade, and gleam,
Till, clustering all their braids in one,
They flow a single stream.

A bracelet spun from mountain mist,
A silvery sash unwound,
With ox-bow curve and sinuous twist
It writhes to reach the Sound.

This is my bark, — a pygmy's ship;
Beneath a child it rolls;
Fear not, — one body makes it dip,
But not a thousand souls.

Float we the grassy banks between;
Without an oar we glide;
The meadows, drest in living green,
Unroll on either side.

Come, take the book we love so well,
And let us read and dream
We see whate'er its pages tell,
And sail an English stream.

Up to the clouds the lark has sprung,
Still trilling as he flies;
The linnet sings as there he sung;
The unseen cuckoo cries,

And daisies strew the banks along,
And yellow kingcups shine,

With cowslips, and a primrose throng,
And humble celandine.

Ah foolish dream! when Nature nursed
Her daughter in the West,
The fount was drained that opened first;
She bared her other breast.

On the young planet's orient shore
Her morning hand she tried;
Then turned the broad medallion o'er
And stamped the sunset side.

Take what she gives, her pine's tall stem,
Her elm with hanging spray;
She wears her mountain diadem
Still in her own proud way.

Look on the forests' ancient kings,
The hemlock's towering pride:
Yon trunk had thrice a hundred rings,
And fell before it died.

Nor think that Nature saves her bloom
And slights our grassy plain;
For us she wears her court costume, —
Look on its broidered train;

The lily with the sprinkled dots,
Brands of the noontide beam;
The cardinal, and the blood-red spots,
Its double in the stream,

As if some wounded eagle's breast,
  Slow throbbing o'er the plain,
Had left its airy path impressed
  In drops of scarlet rain.

And hark! and hark! the woodland rings;
  There thrilled the thrush's soul;
And look! that flash of flamy wings, —
  The fire-plumed oriole!

Above, the hen-hawk swims and swoops,
  Flung from the bright, blue sky;
Below, the robin hops, and whoops
  His piercing, Indian cry.

Beauty runs virgin in the woods
  Robed in her rustic green,
And oft a longing thought intrudes,
  As if we might have seen

Her every finger's every joint
  Ringed with some golden line,
Poet whom Nature did anoint!
  Had our wild home been thine.

Yet think not so; Old England's blood
  Runs warm in English veins;
But wafted o'er the icy flood
  Its better life remains:

Our children know each wildwood smell,
  The bayberry and the fern,

The man who does not know them well
Is all too old to learn.

Be patient! On the breathing page
Still pants our hurried past;
Pilgrim and soldier, saint and sage, —
The poet comes the last!

Though still the lark-voiced matins ring
The world has known so long;
The wood-thrush of the West shall sing
Earth's last sweet even-song!

AFTER A LECTURE ON MOORE

Shine soft, ye trembling tears of light
That strew the mourning skies;
Hushed in the silent dews of night
The harp of Erin lies.

What though her thousand years have past
Of poets, saints, and kings, —
Her echoes only hear the last
That swept those golden strings.

Fling o'er his mound, ye star-lit bowers,
The balmiest wreaths ye wear,
Whose breath has lent your earth-born flowers
Heaven's own ambrosial air.

Breathe, bird of night, thy softest tone,
By shadowy grove and rill;

Thy song will soothe us while we own
That his was sweeter still.

Stay, pitying Time, thy foot for him
Who gave thee swifter wings,
Nor let thine envious shadow dim
The light his glory flings.

If in his cheek unholy blood
Burned for one youthful hour,
'T was but the flushing of the bud
That blooms a milk-white flower.

Take him, kind mother, to thy breast,
Who loved thy smiles so well,
And spread thy mantle o'er his rest
Of rose and asphodel.

The bark has sailed the midnight sea,
The sea without a shore,
That waved its parting sign to thee, —
"A health to thee, Tom Moore!"

And thine, long lingering on the strand,
Its bright-hued streamers furled,
Was loosed by age, with trembling hand,
To seek the silent world.

Not silent! no, the radiant stars
Still singing as they shine,
Unheard through earth's imprisoning bars,
Have voices sweet as thine.

Wake, then, in happier realms above,
The songs of bygone years,
Till angels learn those airs of love
That ravished mortal ears!

AFTER A LECTURE ON KEATS

"Purpureos spargam flores."

The wreath that star-crowned Shelley gave
Is lying on thy Roman grave,
Yet on its turf young April sets
Her store of slender violets;
Though all the Gods their garlands shower,
I too may bring one purple flower.
Alas! what blossom shall I bring,
That opens in my Northern spring?
The garden beds have all run wild,
So trim when I was yet a child;
Flat plantains and unseemly stalks
Have crept across the gravel walks;
The vines are dead, long, long ago,
The almond buds no longer blow.
No more upon its mound I see
The azure, plume-bound fleur-de-lis;
Where once the tulips used to show,
In straggling tufts the pansies grow;
The grass has quenched my white-rayed gem,
The flowering "Star of Bethlehem,"
Though its long blade of glossy green
And pallid stripe may still be seen.
Nature, who treads her nobles down,

And gives their birthright to the clown,
Has sown her base-born weedy things
Above the garden's queens and kings.
Yet one sweet flower of ancient race
Springs in the old familiar place.
When snows were melting down the vale,
And Earth unlaced her icy mail,
And March his stormy trumpet blew,
And tender green came peeping through,
I loved the earliest one to seek
That broke the soil with emerald beak,
And watch the trembling bells so blue
Spread on the column as it grew.
Meek child of earth! thou wilt not shame
The sweet, dead poet's holy name;
The God of music gave thee birth,
Called from the crimson-spotted earth,
Where, sobbing his young life away,
His own fair Hyacinthus lay.
The hyacinth my garden gave
Shall lie upon that Roman grave!

AFTER A LECTURE ON SHELLEY

One broad, white sail in Spezzia's treacherous bay;
On comes the blast; too daring bark, beware!
The cloud has clasped her; lo! it melts away;
The wide, waste waters, but no sail is there.

Morning: a woman looking on the sea;
Midnight: with lamps the long veranda burns;

Come, wandering sail, they watch, they burn for thee!
Suns come and go, alas! no bark returns.

And feet are thronging on the pebbly sands,
And torches flaring in the weedy caves,
Where'er the waters lay with icy hands
The shapes uplifted from their coral graves.

Vainly they seek; the idle quest is o'er;
The coarse, dark women, with their hanging locks,
And lean, wild children gather from the shore
To the black hovels bedded in the rocks.

But Love still prayed, with agonizing wail,
"One, one last look, ye heaving waters, yield!"
Till Ocean, clashing in his jointed mail,
Raised the pale burden on his level shield.

Slow from the shore the sullen waves retire;
His form a nobler element shall claim;
Nature baptized him in ethereal fire,
And Death shall crown him with a wreath of flame.

Fade, mortal semblance, never to return;
Swift is the change within thy crimson shroud;
Seal the white ashes in the peaceful urn;
All else has risen in yon silvery cloud.

Sleep where thy gentle Adonais lies,
Whose open page lay on thy dying heart,

Both in the smile of those blue-vaulted skies,
Earth's fairest dome of all divinest art.

Breathe for his wandering soul one passing sigh,
O happier Christian, while thine eye grows dim, —
In all the mansions of the house on high,
Say not that Mercy has not one for him!

AT THE CLOSE OF A COURSE OF LECTURES

As the voice of the watch to the mariner's dream,
As the footstep of Spring on the ice-girdled stream,
There comes a soft footstep, a whisper, to me, —
The vision is over, — the rivulet free!

We have trod from the threshold of turbulent March,
Till the green scarf of April is hung on the larch,
And down the bright hillside that welcomes the day,
We hear the warm panting of beautiful May.

We will part before Summer has opened her wing,
And the bosom of June swells the bodice of Spring,
While the hope of the season lies fresh in the bud,
And the young life of Nature runs warm in our blood.

It is but a word, and the chain is unbound,
The bracelet of steel drops unclasped to the ground;

No hand shall replace it, — it rests where it fell, —
It is but one word that we all know too well.

Yet the hawk with the wildness untamed in his eye,
If you free him, stares round ere he springs to the sky;
The slave whom no longer his fetters restrain
Will turn for a moment and look at his chain.

Our parting is not as the friendship of years,
That chokes with the blessing it speaks through its tears;
We have walked in a garden, and, looking around,
Have plucked a few leaves from the myrtles we found.

But now at the gate of the garden we stand,
And the moment has come for unclasping the hand;
Will you drop it like lead, and in silence retreat
Like the twenty crushed forms from an omnibus seat?

Nay! hold it one moment, — the last we may share, —
I stretch it in kindness, and not for my fare;
You may pass through the doorway in rank or in file,
If your ticket from Nature is stamped with a smile.

For the sweetest of smiles is the smile as we part,
When the light round the lips is a ray from the heart;

And lest a stray tear from its fountain might swell,
We will seal the bright spring with a quiet farewell.

THE HUDSON

AFTER A LECTURE AT ALBANY

'T WAS a vision of childhood that came with its dawn,
Ere the curtain that covered life's day-star was drawn;
The nurse told the tale when the shadows grew long,
And the mother's soft lullaby breathed it in song.

"There flows a fair stream by the hills of the West," —
She sang to her boy as he lay on her breast;
"Along its smooth margin thy fathers have played;
Beside its deep waters their ashes are laid."

I wandered afar from the land of my birth,
I saw the old rivers, renowned upon earth,
But fancy still painted that wide-flowing stream
With the many-hued pencil of infancy's dream.

I saw the green banks of the castle-crowned Rhine,
Where the grapes drink the moonlight and change it to wine;
I stood by the Avon, whose waves as they glide
Still whisper his glory who sleeps at their side.

But my heart would still yearn for the sound of the
waves
That sing as they flow by my forefathers' graves;
If manhood yet honors my cheek with a tear,
I care not who sees it,— no blush for it here!

Farewell to the deep-bosomed stream of the West!
I fling this loose blossom to float on its breast;
Nor let the dear love of its children grow cold,
Till the channel is dry where its waters have rolled!

December, 1854.

THE NEW EDEN

MEETING OF THE BERKSHIRE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, AT STOCKBRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 13, 1854

Scarce could the parting ocean close,
Seamed by the Mayflower's cleaving bow,
When o'er the rugged desert rose
The waves that tracked the Pilgrim's plough.

Then sprang from many a rock-strewn field
The rippling grass, the nodding grain,
Such growths as English meadows yield
To scanty sun and frequent rain.

But when the fiery days were done,
And Autumn brought his purple haze,
Then, kindling in the slanted sun,
The hillsides gleamed with golden maize.

The food was scant, the fruits were few:
A red-streak glistening here and there;

Perchance in statelier precincts grew
Some stern old Puritanic pear.

Austere in taste, and tough at core,
Its unrelenting bulk was shed,
To ripen in the Pilgrim's store
When all the summer sweets were fled.

Such was his lot, to front the storm
With iron heart and marble brow,
Nor ripen till his earthly form
Was cast from life's autumnal bough.

But ever on the bleakest rock
We bid the brightest beacon glow,
And still upon the thorniest stock
The sweetest roses love to blow.

So on our rude and wintry soil
We feed the kindling flame of art,
And steal the tropic's blushing spoil
To bloom on Nature's ice-clad heart.

See how the softening Mother's breast
Warms to her children's patient wiles, —
Her lips by loving Labor pressed
Break in a thousand dimpling smiles,

From when the flushing bud of June
Dawns with its first auroral hue,
Till shines the rounded harvest-moon,
And velvet dahlias drink the dew.

Nor these the only gifts she brings;
Look where the laboring orchard groans,
And yields its beryl-threaded strings
For chestnut burs and hemlock cones.

Dear though the shadowy maple be,
And dearer still the whispering pine,
Dearest yon russet-laden tree
Browned by the heavy rubbing kine!

There childhood flung its rustling stone,
There venturous boyhood learned to climb,—
How well the early graft was known
Whose fruit was ripe ere harvest-time!

Nor be the Fleming's pride forgot,
With swinging drops and drooping bells,
Freckled and splashed with streak and spot,
On the warm-breasted, sloping swells;

Nor Persia's painted garden-queen,—
Frail Houri of the trellised wall,—
Her deep-cleft bosom scarfed with green,—
Fairest to see, and first to fall.

When man provoked his mortal doom,
And Eden trembled as he fell,
When blossoms sighed their last perfume,
And branches waved their long farewell,

One sucker crept beneath the gate,
  One seed was wafted o'er the wall,
One bough sustained his trembling weight;
  These left the garden, — these were all.

And far o'er many a distant zone
  These wrecks of Eden still are flung:
The fruits that Paradise hath known
  Are still in earthly gardens hung.

Yes, by our own unstoried stream
  The pink-white apple-blossoms burst
That saw the young Euphrates gleam, —
  That Gihon's circling waters nursed.

For us the ambrosial pear displays
  The wealth its arching branches hold,
Bathed by a hundred summery days
  In floods of mingling fire and gold.

And here, where beauty's cheek of flame
  With morning's earliest beam is fed,
The sunset-painted peach may claim
  To rival its celestial red.

What though in some unmoistened vale
  The summer leaf grow brown and sere,
Say, shall our star of promise fail
  That circles half the rolling sphere,

From beaches salt with bitter spray,
O'er prairies green with softest rain,
And ridges bright with evening's ray,
To rocks that shade the stormless main?

If by our slender-threaded streams
The blade and leaf and blossom die,
If, drained by noontide's parching beams,
The milky veins of Nature dry,

See, with her swelling bosom bare,
Yon wild-eyed Sister in the West, —
The ring of Empire round her hair,
The Indian's wampum on her breast!

We saw the August sun descend,
Day after day, with blood-red stain,
And the blue mountains dimly blend
With smoke-wreaths from the burning plain;

Beneath the hot Sirocco's wings
We sat and told the withering hours,
Till Heaven unsealed its hoarded springs,
And bade them leap in flashing showers.

Yet in our Ishmael's thirst we knew
The mercy of the Sovereign hand
Would pour the fountain's quickening dew
To feed some harvest of the land.

No flaming swords of wrath surround
Our second Garden of the Blest;

It spreads beyond its rocky bound,
It climbs Nevada's glittering crest.

God keep the tempter from its gate!
God shield the children, lest they fall
From their stern fathers' free estate, —
Till Ocean is its only wall!

SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 22, 1855

NEW ENGLAND, we love thee; no time can erase
From the hearts of thy children the smile on thy face.
'T is the mother's fond look of affection and pride,
As she gives her fair son to the arms of his bride.

His bride may be fresher in beauty's young flower;
She may blaze in the jewels she brings with her dower.
But passion must chill in Time's pitiless blast;
The one that first loved us will love to the last.

You have left the dear land of the lake and the hill,
But its winds and its waters will talk with you still.
"Forget not," they whisper, "your love is our debt,"
And echo breathes softly, "We never forget."

The banquet's gay splendors are gleaming around,

But your hearts have flown back o'er the waves of the Sound;
They have found the brown home where their pulses were born;
They are throbbing their way through the trees and the corn.

There are roofs you remember, — their glory is fled;
There are mounds in the churchyard, — one sigh for the dead.
There are wrecks, there are ruins, all scattered around;
But Earth has no spot like that corner of ground.

Come, let us be cheerful, — remember last night,
How they cheered us, and — never mind — meant it all right;
To-night, we harm nothing, — we love in the lump;
Here 's a bumper to Maine, in the juice of the pump!

Here 's to all the good people, wherever they be,
Who have grown in the shade of the liberty-tree;
We all love its leaves, and its blossoms and fruit,
But pray have a care of the fence round its root.

We should like to talk big; it 's a kind of a right,
When the tongue has got loose and the waistband grown tight;
But, as pretty Miss Prudence remarked to her beau,
On its own heap of compost no biddy should crow.

Enough! There are gentlemen waiting to talk,
Whose words are to mine as the flower to the stalk.
Stand by your old mother whatever befall;
God bless all her children! Good night to you all!

FAREWELL

TO J. R. LOWELL

FAREWELL, for the bark has her breast to the tide,
And the rough arms of Ocean are stretched for his bride;
The winds from the mountain stream over the bay;
One clasp of the hand, then away and away!

I see the tall mast as it rocks by the shore;
The sun is declining, I see it once more;
To-day like the blade in a thick-waving field,
To-morrow the spike on a Highlander's shield.

Alone, while the cloud pours its treacherous breath,
With the blue lips all round her whose kisses are death;
Ah, think not the breeze that is urging her sail
Has left her unaided to strive with the gale.

There are hopes that play round her, like fires on the mast,
That will light the dark hour till its danger has past;
There are prayers that will plead with the storm when it raves,
And whisper "Be still!" to the turbulent waves.

Nay, think not that Friendship has called us in vain
To join the fair ring ere we break it again;
There is strength in its circle, — you lose the bright star,
But its sisters still chain it, though shining afar.

I give you one health in the juice of the vine,
The blood of the vineyard shall mingle with mine;
Thus, thus let us drain the last dew-drops of gold,
As we empty our hearts of the blessings they hold.

April 29, 1855.

FOR THE MEETING OF THE BURNS CLUB

1856

THE mountains glitter in the snow
A thousand leagues asunder;
Yet here, amid the banquet's glow,
I hear their voice of thunder;
Each giant's ice-bound goblet clinks;
A flowing stream is summoned;
Wachusett to Ben Nevis drinks;
Monadnock to Ben Lomond!

Though years have clipped the eagle's plume
That crowned the chieftain's bonnet,
The sun still sees the heather bloom,
The silver mists lie on it;

With tartan kilt and philibeg,
What stride was ever bolder
Than his who showed the naked leg
Beneath the plaided shoulder?

The echoes sleep on Cheviot's hills,
That heard the bugles blowing
When down their sides the crimson rills
With mingled blood were flowing;
The hunts where gallant hearts were game,
The slashing on the border,
The raid that swooped with sword and flame,
Give place to "law and order."

Not while the rocking steeples reel
With midnight tocsins ringing,
Not while the crashing war-notes peal,
God sets his poets singing;
The bird is silent in the night,
Or shrieks a cry of warning
While fluttering round the beacon-light, —
But hear him greet the morning!

The lark of Scotia's morning sky!
Whose voice may sing his praises?
With Heaven's own sunlight in his eye,
He walked among the daisies,
Till through the cloud of fortune's wrong
He soared to fields of glory;
But left his land her sweetest song
And earth her saddest story.

'T is not the forts the builder piles
That chain the earth together;
The wedded crowns, the sister isles,
Would laugh at such a tether;
The kindling thought, the throbbing words,
That set the pulses beating,
Are stronger than the myriad swords
Of mighty armies meeting.

Thus while within the banquet glows,
Without, the wild winds whistle,
We drink a triple health, — the Rose,
The Shamrock, and the Thistle!
Their blended hues shall never fade
Till War has hushed his cannon, —
Close-twined as ocean-currents braid
The Thames, the Clyde, the Shannon!

ODE FOR WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

CELEBRATION OF THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, FEBRUARY 22, 1856

Welcome to the day returning,
Dearer still as ages flow,
While the torch of Faith is burning,
Long as Freedom's altars glow!
See the hero whom it gave us
Slumbering on a mother's breast;
For the arm he stretched to save us,
Be its morn forever blest!

Hear the tale of youthful glory,
While of Britain's rescued band
Friend and foe repeat the story,
Spread his fame o'er sea and land,
Where the red cross, proudly streaming,
Flaps above the frigate's deck,
Where the golden lilies, gleaming,
Star the watch-towers of Quebec.

Look! The shadow on the dial
Marks the hour of deadlier strife;
Days of terror, years of trial,
Scourge a nation into life.
Lo, the youth, become her leader!
All her baffled tyrants yield;
Through his arm the Lord hath freed her;
Crown him on the tented field!

Vain is Empire's mad temptation!
Not for him an earthly crown!
He whose sword hath freed a nation
Strikes the offered sceptre down.
See the throneless Conqueror seated,
Ruler by a people's choice;
See the Patriot's task completed;
Hear the Father's dying voice!

"By the name that you inherit,
By the sufferings you recall,
Cherish the fraternal spirit;
Love your country first of all!

Listen not to idle questions
If its bands may be untied;
Doubt the patriot whose suggestions
Strive a nation to divide!"

Father! We, whose ears have tingled
With the discord-notes of shame, —
We, whose sires their blood have mingled
In the battle's thunder-flame, —
Gathering, while this holy morning
Lights the land from sea to sea,
Hear thy counsel, heed thy warning;
Trust us, while we honor thee!

BIRTHDAY OF DANIEL WEBSTER

JANUARY 18, 1856

When life hath run its largest round
Of toil and triumph, joy and woe,
How brief a storied page is found
To compass all its outward show!

The world-tried sailor tires and droops;
His flag is rent, his keel forgot;
His farthest voyages seem but loops
That float from life's entangled knot.

But when within the narrow space
Some larger soul hath lived and wrought,
Whose sight was open to embrace
The boundless realms of deed and thought, —

When, stricken by the freezing blast,
A nation's living pillars fall,
How rich the storied page, how vast,
A word, a whisper, can recall!

No medal lifts its fretted face,
Nor speaking marble cheats your eye,
Yet, while these pictured lines I trace,
A living image passes by:

A roof beneath the mountain pines;
The cloisters of a hill-girt plain;
The front of life's embattled lines;
A mound beside the heaving main.

These are the scenes: a boy appears;
Set life's round dial in the sun,
Count the swift arc of seventy years,
His frame is dust; his task is done.

Yet pause upon the noontide hour,
Ere the declining sun has laid
His bleaching rays on manhood's power,
And look upon the mighty shade.

No gloom that stately shape can hide,
No change uncrown its brow; behold!
Dark, calm, large-fronted, lightning-eyed,
Earth has no double from its mould!

Ere from the fields by valor won
The battle-smoke had rolled away,

And bared the blood-red setting sun,
His eyes were opened on the day.

His land was but a shelving strip
Black with the strife that made it free;
He lived to see its banners dip
Their fringes in the Western sea.

The boundless prairies learned his name,
His words the mountain echoes knew,
The Northern breezes swept his fame
From icy lake to warm bayou.

In toil he lived; in peace he died;
When life's full cycle was complete,
Put off his robes of power and pride,
And laid them at his Master's feet.

His rest is by the storm-swept waves
Whom life's wild tempests roughly tried,
Whose heart was like the streaming caves
Of ocean, throbbing at his side.

Death's cold white hand is like the snow
Laid softly on the furrowed hill,
It hides the broken seams below,
And leaves the summit brighter still.

In vain the envious tongue upbraids;
His name a nation's heart shall keep
Till morning's latest sunlight fades
On the blue tablet of the deep!

THE VOICELESS

We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild-flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them: —
Alas for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their hearts' sad story, —
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his longed-for wine
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses, —
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!

THE TWO STREAMS

Behold the rocky wall
That down its sloping sides
Pours the swift rain-drops, blending, as they fall,
In rushing river-tides!

Yon stream, whose sources run
Turned by a pebble's edge,
Is Athabasca, rolling toward the sun
Through the cleft mountain-ledge.

The slender rill had strayed,
But for the slanting stone,
To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will
Life's parting stream descends,
And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
Each widening torrent bends, —

From the same cradle's side,
From the same mother's knee, —
One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
One to the Peaceful Sea!

THE PROMISE

Not charity we ask,
Nor yet thy gift refuse ;
Please thy light fancy with the easy task
Only to look and choose.

The little-heeded toy
That wins thy treasured gold
May be the dearest memory, holiest joy,
Of coming years untold.

Heaven rains on every heart,
But there its showers divide,
The drops of mercy choosing, as they part,
The dark or glowing side.

One kindly deed may turn
The fountain of thy soul
To love's sweet day-star, that shall o'er thee burn
Long as its currents roll !

The pleasures thou hast planned, —
Where shall their memory be
When the white angel with the freezing hand
Shall sit and watch by thee ?

Living, thou dost not live,
If mercy's spring run dry ;
What Heaven has lent thee wilt thou freely give,
Dying, thou shalt not die !

He promised even so!
To thee his lips repeat, —
Behold, the tears that soothed thy sister's woe
Have washed thy Master's feet!

March 20, 1859.

AVIS

I may not rightly call thy name, —
Alas! thy forehead never knew
The kiss that happier children claim,
Nor glistened with baptismal dew.

Daughter of want and wrong and woe,
I saw thee with thy sister-band,
Snatched from the whirlpool's narrowing flow
By Mercy's strong yet trembling hand.

"Avis!" — With Saxon eye and cheek,
At once a woman and a child,
The saint uncrowned I came to seek
Drew near to greet us, — spoke, and smiled.

God gave that sweet sad smile she wore
All wrong to shame, all souls to win, —
A heavenly sunbeam sent before
Her footsteps through a world of sin.

"And who is Avis?" — Hear the tale
The calm-voiced matrons gravely tell, —
The story known through all the vale
Where Avis and her sisters dwell.

With the lost children running wild,
  Strayed from the hand of human care,
They find one little refuse child
  Left helpless in its poisoned lair.

The primal mark is on her face, —
  The chattel-stamp, — the pariah-stain
That follows still her hunted race, —
  The curse without the crime of Cain.

How shall our smooth-turned phrase relate
  The little suffering outcast's ail?
Not Lazarus at the rich man's gate
  So turned the rose-wreathed revellers pale.

Ah, veil the living death from sight
  That wounds our beauty-loving eye!
The children turn in selfish fright,
  The white-lipped nurses hurry by.

Take her, dread Angel! Break in love
  This bruised reed and make it thine! —
No voice descended from above,
  But Avis answered, "She is mine."

The task that dainty menials spurn
  The fair young girl has made her own;
Her heart shall teach, her hand shall learn
  The toils, the duties yet unknown.

So Love and Death in lingering strife
  Stand face to face from day to day,

Still battling for the spoil of Life
While the slow seasons creep away.

Love conquers Death; the prize is won;
See to her joyous bosom pressed
The dusky daughter of the sun, —
The bronze against the marble breast!

Her task is done; no voice divine
Has crowned her deeds with saintly fame.
No eye can see the aureole shine
That rings her brow with heavenly flame.

Yet what has holy page more sweet,
Or what had woman's love more fair,
When Mary clasped her Saviour's feet
With flowing eyes and streaming hair?

Meek child of sorrow, walk unknown,
The Angel of that earthly throng,
And let thine image live alone
To hallow this unstudied song!

THE LIVING TEMPLE

Not in the world of light alone,
Where God has built his blazing throne,
Nor yet alone in earth below,
With belted seas that come and go,
And endless isles of sunlit green,
Is all thy Maker's glory seen:

Look in upon thy wondrous frame, —
Eternal wisdom still the same!

The smooth, soft air with pulse-like waves
Flows murmuring through its hidden caves,
Whose streams of brightening purple rush,
Fired with a new and livelier blush,
While all their burden of decay
The ebbing current steals away,
And red with Nature's flame they start
From the warm fountains of the heart.

No rest that throbbing slave may ask,
Forever quivering o'er his task,
While far and wide a crimson jet
Leaps forth to fill the woven net
Which in unnumbered crossing tides
The flood of burning life divides,
Then, kindling each decaying part,
Creeps back to find the throbbing heart.

But warmed with that unchanging flame
Behold the outward moving frame,
Its living marbles jointed strong
With glistening band and silvery thong,
And linked to reason's guiding reins
By myriad rings in trembling chains,
Each graven with the threaded zone
Which claims it as the master's own.

See how yon beam of seeming white
Is braided out of seven-hued light,

Yet in those lucid globes no ray
By any chance shall break astray.
Hark how the rolling surge of sound,
Arches and spirals circling round,
Wakes the hushed spirit through thine ear
With music it is heaven to hear.

Then mark the cloven sphere that holds
All thought in its mysterious folds;
That feels sensation's faintest thrill,
And flashes forth the sovereign will;
Think on the stormy world that dwells
Locked in its dim and clustering cells!
The lightning gleams of power it sheds
Along its hollow glassy threads!

O Father! grant thy love divine
To make these mystic temples thine!
When wasting age and wearying strife
Have sapped the leaning walls of life,
When darkness gathers over all,
And the last tottering pillars fall,
Take the poor dust thy mercy warms,
And mould it into heavenly forms!

AT A BIRTHDAY FESTIVAL

TO J. R. LOWELL

We will not speak of years to-night, —
For what have years to bring
But larger floods of love and light,
And sweeter songs to sing?

We will not drown in wordy praise
The kindly thoughts that rise;
If Friendship own one tender phrase,
He reads it in our eyes.

We need not waste our school-boy art
To gild this notch of Time; —
Forgive me if my wayward heart
Has throbbed in artless rhyme.

Enough for him the silent grasp
That knits us hand in hand,
And he the bracelet's radiant clasp
That locks our circling band.

Strength to his hours of manly toil!
Peace to his starlit dreams!
Who loves alike the furrowed soil,
The music-haunted streams!

Sweet smiles to keep forever bright
The sunshine on his lips,
And faith that sees the ring of light
Round nature's last eclipse!

February 22, 1859.

A BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE

TO J. F. CLARKE

WHO is the shepherd sent to lead,
Through pastures green, the Master's sheep?
What guileless "Israelite indeed"
The folded flock may watch and keep?

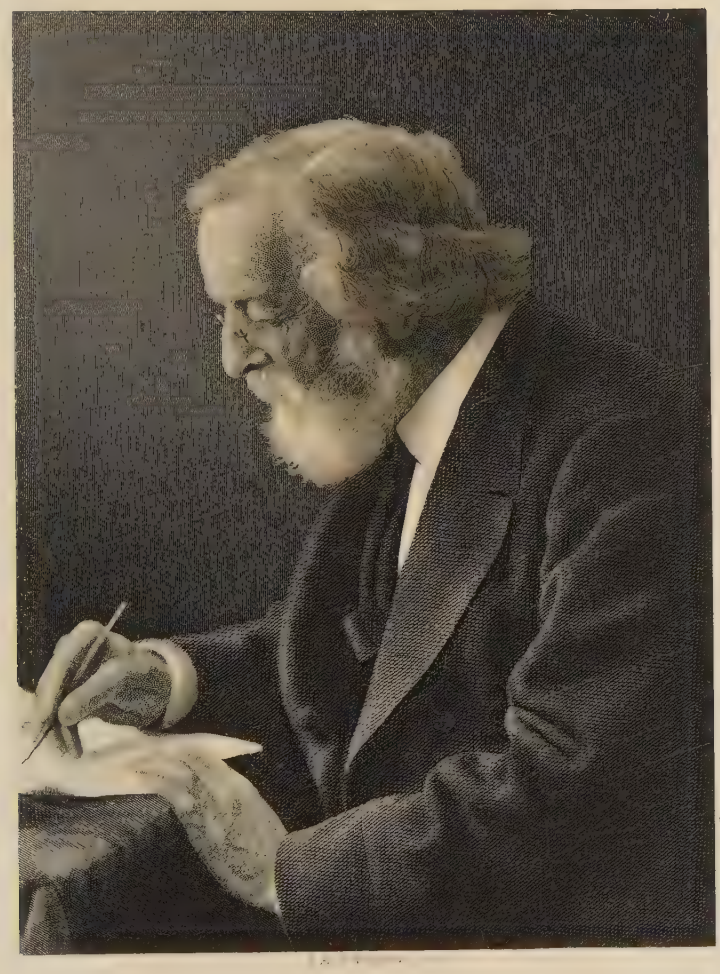
He who with manliest spirit joins
The heart of gentlest human mould,
With burning light and girded loins,
To guide the flock, or watch the fold;

True to all Truth the world denies,
Not tongue-tied for its gilded sin;
Not always right in all men's eyes,
But faithful to the light within;

Who asks no meed of earthly fame,
Who knows no earthly master's call,
Who hopes for man, through guilt and shame,
Still answering, "God is over all";

Who makes another's grief his own,
Whose smile lends joy a double cheer;
Where lives the saint, if such be known? —
Speak softly, — such an one is here!

O faithful shepherd! thou hast borne
The heat and burden of the day;



James Freeman Clarke

Yet, o'er thee, bright with beams unshorn,
The sun still shows thine onward way.

To thee our fragrant love we bring,
In buds that April half displays,
Sweet first-born angels of the spring,
Caught in their opening hymn of praise.

What though our faltering accents fail,
Our captives know their message well,
Our words unbreathed their lips exhale,
And sigh more love than ours can tell.

April 4, 1860.

THE GRAY CHIEF

FOR THE MEETING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY, 1859

'T is sweet to fight our battles o'er,
And crown with honest praise
The gray old chief, who strikes no more
The blow of better days.

Before the true and trusted sage
With willing hearts we bend,
When years have touched with hallowing age
Our Master, Guide, and Friend.

For all his manhood's labor past,
For love and faith long tried,
His age is honored to the last,
Though strength and will have died.

But when, untamed by toil and strife,
Full in our front he stands,
The torch of light, the shield of life,
Still lifted in his hands,

No temple, though its walls resound
With bursts of ringing cheers,
Can hold the honors that surround
His manhood's twice-told years!

THE LAST LOOK

W. W. SWAIN

Behold — not him we knew!
This was the prison which his soul looked through,
Tender, and brave, and true.

His voice no more is heard;
And his dead name — that dear familiar word —
Lies on our lips unstirred.

He spake with poet's tongue;
Living, for him the minstrel's lyre was strung:
He shall not die unsung!

Grief tried his love, and pain;
And the long bondage of his martyr-chain
Vexed his sweet soul, — in vain!

It felt life's surges break,
As, girt with stormy seas, his island lake,
Smiling while tempests wake.

How can we sorrow more?
Grieve not for him whose heart had gone before
To that untrodden shore!

Lo, through its leafy screen,
A gleam of sunlight on a ring of green,
Untrodden, half unseen!

Here let his body rest,
Where the calm shadows that his soul loved best
May slide above his breast.

Smooth his uncurtained bed;
And if some natural tears are softly shed,
It is not for the dead.

Fold the green turf aright
For the long hours before the morning's light,
And say the last Good Night!

And plant a clear white stone
Close by those mounds which hold his loved, his own, —
Lonely, but not alone.

Here let him sleeping lie,
Till Heaven's bright watchers slumber in the sky
And Death himself shall die!

NAUSHON, September 22, 1858.

IN MEMORY OF CHARLES WENTWORTH UPHAM, JR.

He was all sunshine ; in his face
The very soul of sweetness shone;
Fairest and gentlest of his race ;
None like him we can call our own.

Something there was of one that died
In her fresh spring-time long ago,
Our first dear Mary, angel-eyed,
Whose smile it was a bliss to know.

Something of her whose love imparts
Such radiance to her day's decline,
We feel its twilight in our hearts
Bright as the earliest morning-shine.

Yet richer strains our eye could trace
That made our plainer mould more fair,
That curved the lip with happier grace,
That waved the soft and silken hair.

Dust unto dust! the lips are still
That only spoke to cheer and bless;
The folded hands lie white and chill
Unclasped from sorrow's last caress.

Leave him in peace ; he will not heed
These idle tears we vainly pour,

Give back to earth the fading weed
Of mortal shape his spirit wore.

"Shall I not weep my heartstrings torn,
My flower of love that falls half blown,
My youth uncrowned, my life forlorn,
A thorny path to walk alone?"

O Mary! one who bore thy name,
Whose Friend and Master was divine,
Sat waiting silent till He came,
Bowed down in speechless grief like thine.

"Where have ye laid him?" "Come," they say,
Pointing to where the loved one slept;
Weeping, the sister led the way, —
And, seeing Mary, "Jesus wept."

He weeps with thee, with all that mourn,
And He shall wipe thy streaming eyes
Who knew all sorrows, woman-born, —
Trust in his word; thy dead shall rise!

April 15, 1860.

MARTHA

DIED JANUARY 7, 1861

SEXTON! Martha 's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
Her weary hands their labor cease;
Good night, poor Martha, — sleep in peace!
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha 's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
For many a year has Martha said,
"I 'm old and poor, — would I were dead!"
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha 's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
She 'll bring no more, by day or night,
Her basket full of linen white.
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha 's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
'T is fitting she should lie below
A pure white sheet of drifted snow.
Toll the bell!

Sexton! Martha 's dead and gone;
Toll the bell! toll the bell!
Sleep, Martha, sleep, to wake in light,
Where all the robes are stainless white.
Toll the bell!

MEETING OF THE ALUMNI OF HARVARD COLLEGE

1857

I THANK you, MR. PRESIDENT, you 've kindly broke the ice;
Virtue should always be the first, — I 'm only SECOND VICE —

(A vice is something with a screw that 's made to
hold its jaw
Till some old file has played away upon an ancient
saw).

Sweet brothers by the Mother's side, the babes of
days gone by,
All nurslings of her Juno breasts whose milk is
never dry,
We come again, like half-grown boys, and gather at
her beck
About her knees, and on her lap, and clinging
round her neck.

We find her at her stately door, and in her ancient
chair,
Dressed in the robes of red and green she always
loved to wear.
Her eye has all its radiant youth, her cheek its
morning flame ;
We drop our roses as we go, hers flourish still the
same.

We have been playing many an hour, and far away
we 've strayed,
Some laughing in the cheerful sun, some lingering
in the shade ;
And some have tired, and laid them down where
darker shadows fall, —
Dear as her loving voice may be, they cannot hear
its call.

What miles we 've travelled since we shook the
dew-drops from our shoes
We gathered on this classic green, so famed for
heavy dues!
How many boys have joined the game, how many
slipped away,
Since we 've been running up and down, and hav-
ing out our play!

One boy at work with book and brief, and one
with gown and band,
One sailing vessels on the pool, one digging in the
sand,
One flying paper kites on change, one planting
little pills, —
The seeds of certain annual flowers well known as
little bills.

What maidens met us on our way, and clasped us
hand in hand!
What cherubs, — not the legless kind, that fly, but
never stand!
How many a youthful head we 've seen put on its
silver crown!
What sudden changes back again to youth's em-
purpled brown!

But fairer sights have met our eyes, and broader
lights have shone,
Since others lit their midnight lamps where once
we trimmed our own;
A thousand trains that flap the sky with flags of
rushing fire,

And, throbbing in the Thunderer's hand, Thought's
million-chorded lyre.

We 've seen the sparks of Empire fly beyond the
mountain bars,
Till, glittering o'er the Western wave, they joined
the setting stars ;
And ocean trodden into paths that trampling giants
ford,
To find the planet's vertebræ and sink its spinal cord.

We 've tried reform, — and chloroform, — and both
have turned our brain ;
When France called up the photograph, we roused
the foe to pain ;
Just so those earlier sages shared the chaplet of
renown, —
Hers sent a bladder to the clouds, ours brought
their lightning down.

We 've seen the little tricks of life, its varnish and
veneer,
Its stucco-fronts of character flake off and dis-
appear,
We 've learned that oft the brownest hands will
heap the biggest pile,
And met with many a " perfect brick " beneath a
rimless " tile."

What dreams we 've had of deathless name, as
scholars, statesmen, bards,
While Fame, the lady with the trump, held up her
picture cards !

Till, having nearly played our game, she gayly whispered, "Ah!
I said you should be something grand, — you 'll soon be grandpapa."

Well, well, the old have had their day, the young must take their turn;
There 's something always to forget, and something still to learn;
But how to tell what 's old or young, the tap-root from the sprigs,
Since Florida revealed her fount to Ponce de Leon Twiggs?

The wisest was a Freshman once, just freed from bar and bolt,
As noisy as a kettle-drum, as leggy as a colt;
Don't be too savage with the boys, — the Primer does not say
The kitten ought to go to church because the cat doth prey.

The law of merit and of age is not the rule of three;
Non constat that A. M. must prove as busy as A. B.
When Wise the father tracked the son, ballooning through the skies,
He taught a lesson to the old, — go thou and do like Wise!

Now then, old boys, and reverend youth, of high or low degree,

Remember how we only get one annual out of three,
And such as dare to simmer down three dinners into one
Must cut their salads mighty short, and pepper well with fun.

I 've passed my zenith long ago, it 's time for me to set;
A dozen planets wait to shine, and I am lingering yet,
As sometimes in the blaze of day a milk-and-watery moon
Stains with its dim and fading ray the lustrous blue of noon.

Farewell! yet let one echo rise to shake our ancient hall;
God save the Queen, — whose throne is here, — the Mother of us all!
Till dawns the great commencement-day on every shore and sea,
And "Expectantur" all mankind, to take their last Degree!

THE PARTING SONG

FESTIVAL OF THE ALUMNI, 1857

THE noon of summer sheds its ray
On Harvard's holy ground;
The Matron calls, the sons obey,
And gather smiling round.

CHORUS.

Then old and young together stand,
The sunshine and the snow,
As heart to heart, and hand in hand,
We sing before we go!

Her hundred opening doors have swung;
Through every storied hall
The pealing echoes loud have rung,
"Thrice welcome one and all!"
Then old and young, etc.

We floated through her peaceful bay,
To sail life's stormy seas;
But left our anchor where it lay
Beneath her green old trees.
Then old and young, etc.

As now we lift its lengthening chain,
That held us fast of old,
The rusted rings grow bright again, —
Their iron turns to gold.
Then old and young, etc.

Though scattered ere the setting sun,
As leaves when wild winds blow,
Our home is here, our hearts are one,
Till Charles forgets to flow.
Then old and young, etc.

FOR THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL SANITARY ASSOCIATION

1860

WHAT makes the Healing Art divine?
The bitter drug we buy and sell,
The brands that scorch, the blades that shine,
The scars we leave, the "cures" we tell?

Are these thy glories, holiest Art, —
The trophies that adorn thee best, —
Or but thy triumph's meanest part, —
Where mortal weakness stands confessed?

We take the arms that Heaven supplies
For Life's long battle with Disease,
Taught by our various need to prize
Our frailest weapons, even these.

But ah! when Science drops her shield —
Its peaceful shelter proved in vain —
And bares her snow-white arm to wield
The sad, stern ministry of pain;

When shuddering o'er the fount of life,
She folds her heaven-anointed wings,
To lift unmoved the glittering knife
That searches all its crimson springs;

When, faithful to her ancient lore,
She thrusts aside her fragrant balm

For blistering juice, or cankering ore,
And tames them till they cure or calm;

When in her gracious hand are seen
The dregs and scum of earth and seas,
Her kindness counting all things clean
That lend the sighing sufferer ease;

Though on the field that Death has won,
She save some stragglers in retreat; —
These single acts of mercy done
Are but confessions of defeat.

What though our tempered poisons save
Some wrecks of life from aches and ails;
Those grand specifics Nature gave
Were never poised by weights or scales!

God lent his creatures light and air,
And waters open to the skies;
Man locks him in a stifling lair,
And wonders why his brother dies!

In vain our pitying tears are shed,
In vain we rear the sheltering pile
Where Art weeds out from bed to bed
The plagues we planted by the mile!

Be that the glory of the past;
With these our sacred toils begin:
So flies in tatters from its mast
The yellow flag of sloth and sin,

And lo! the starry folds reveal
The blazoned truth we hold so dear:
To guard is better than to heal, —
The shield is nobler than the spear!

FOR THE BURNS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

JANUARY 25, 1859

His birthday. — Nay, we need not speak
The name each heart is beating, —
Each glistening eye and flushing cheek
In light and flame repeating!

We come in one tumultuous tide, —
One surge of wild emotion, —
As crowding through the Frith of Clyde
Rolls in the Western Ocean;

As when yon cloudless, quartered moon
Hangs o'er each storied river,
The swelling breasts of Ayr and Doon
With sea-green wavelets quiver.

The century shrivels like a scroll, —
The past becomes the present, —
And face to face, and soul to soul,
We greet the monarch-peasant.

While Shenstone strained in feeble flights
With Corydon and Phillis, —

While Wolfe was climbing Abraham's heights
To snatch the Bourbon lilies, —

Who heard the wailing infant's cry,
The babe beneath the sheeling,
Whose song to-night in every sky
Will shake earth's starry ceiling, —

Whose passion-breathing voice ascends
And floats like incense o'er us,
Whose ringing lay of friendship blends
With labor's anvil chorus?

We love him, not for sweetest song,
Though never tone so tender;
We love him, even in his wrong, —
His wasteful self-surrender.

We praise him, not for gifts divine, —
His Muse was born of woman, —
His manhood breathes in every line, —
Was ever heart more human?

We love him, praise him, just for this:
In every form and feature,
Through wealth and want, through woe and bliss,
He saw his fellow-creature!

No soul could sink beneath his love, —
Not even angel blasted;
No mortal power could soar above
The pride that all outlasted!

Ay! Heaven had set one living man
Beyond the pedant's tether, —
His virtues, frailties, HE may scan,
Who weighs them all together!

I fling my pebble on the cairn
Of him, though dead, undying;
Sweet Nature's nursling, bonniest bairn
Beneath her daisies lying.

The waning suns, the wasting globe,
Shall spare the minstrel's story, —
The centuries weave his purple robe,
The mountain-mist of glory!

AT A MEETING OF FRIENDS

AUGUST 29, 1859

I REMEMBER — why, yes! God bless me! and was
it so long ago?
I fear I 'm growing forgetful, as old folks do, you
know;
It must have been in 'forty — I would say 'thirty-
nine —
We talked this matter over, I and a friend of
mine.

He said, "Well now, old fellow, I 'm thinking that
you and I,
If we act like other people, shall be older by and
by;

What though the bright blue ocean is smooth as
a pond can be,
There is always a line of breakers to fringe the
broadest sea.

"We 're taking it mighty easy, but that is nothing
strange,
For up to the age of thirty we spend our years like
change;
But creeping up towards the forties, as fast as the
old years fill,
And Time steps in for payment, we seem to change
a bill."

"I know it," I said, "old fellow; you speak the
solemn truth;
A man can't live to a hundred and likewise keep
his youth;
But what if the ten years coming shall silver-streak
my hair,
You know I shall then be forty; of course I shall
not care.

"At forty a man grows heavy and tired of fun and
noise;
Leaves dress to the five-and-twenties and love to
the silly boys;
No foppish tricks at forty, no pinching of waists
and toes,
But high-low shoes and flannels and good thick
worsted hose."

But one fine August morning I found myself
awake:
My birthday: — By Jove, I 'm forty! Yes, forty,
and no mistake!
Why, this is the very milestone, I think I used to
hold,
That when a fellow had come to, a fellow would
then be old!

But that is the young folks' nonsense; they 're full
of their foolish stuff;
A man 's in his prime at forty, — I see *that* plain
enough;
At *fifty* a man *is* wrinkled, and *may be* bald or
gray;
I call men old at fifty, in spite of all they
say.

At last comes another August with mist and rain
and shine;
Its mornings are slowly counted and creep to
twenty-nine,
And when on the western summits the fading light
appears,
It touches with rosy fingers the last of my fifty
years.

There have been both men and women whose
hearts were firm and bold,
But there never was one of fifty that loved to say
"I 'm old";

So any elderly person that strives to shirk his years,
Make him stand up at a table and try him by his peers.

Now here I stand at fifty, my jury gathered round;
Sprinkled with dust of silver, but not yet silver-crowned,
Ready to meet your verdict, waiting to hear it told;
Guilty of fifty summers; speak! Is the verdict *old?*

No! say that his hearing fails him; say that his sight grows dim;
Say that he 's getting wrinkled and weak in back and limb,
Losing his wits and temper, but pleading, to make amends,
The youth of his fifty summers he finds in his twenty friends.

BOSTON COMMON: THREE PICTURES

FOR THE FAIR IN AID OF THE FUND TO PROCURE BALL'S STATUE OF WASHINGTON

1630

All overgrown with bush and fern,
And straggling clumps of tangled trees,
With trunks that lean and boughs that turn,
Bent eastward by the mastering breeze, —

With spongy bogs that drip and fill
A yellow pond with muddy rain,
Beneath the shaggy southern hill
Lies wet and low the Shawmut plain.
And hark! the trodden branches crack;
A crow flaps off with startled scream;
A straying woodchuck canters back;
A bittern rises from the stream;
Leaps from his lair a frightened deer;
An otter plunges in the pool; —
Here comes old Shawmut's pioneer,
The parson on his brindled bull!

1774

The streets are thronged with trampling feet,
The northern hill is ridged with graves,
But night and morn the drum is beat
To frighten down the "rebel knaves."
The stones of King Street still are red,
And yet the bloody red-coats come:
I hear their pacing sentry's tread,
The click of steel, the tap of drum,
And over all the open green,
Where grazed of late the harmless kine,
The cannon's deepening ruts are seen,
The war-horse stamps, the bayonets shine.
The clouds are dark with crimson rain
Above the murderous hirelings' den,
And soon their whistling showers shall stain
The pipe-clayed belts of Gage's men.

186—

Around the green, in morning light,
The spired and palaced summits blaze,
And, sunlike, from her Beacon-height
The dome-crowned city spreads her rays;
They span the waves, they belt the plains,
They skirt the roads with bands of white,
Till with a flash of gilded panes
Yon farthest hillside bounds the sight.
Peace, Freedom, Wealth! no fairer view,
Though with the wild-bird's restless wings
We sailed beneath the noontide's blue
Or chased the moonlight's endless rings!
Here, fitly raised by grateful hands
His holiest memory to recall,
The Hero's, Patriot's image stands;
He led our sires who won them all!

November 14, 1859.

THE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

A NIGHTMARE DREAM BY DAYLIGHT

Do you know the Old Man of the Sea, of the Sea?
Have you met with that dreadful old man?
If you have n't been caught, you will be, you will be;
For catch you he must and he can.

He does n't hold on by your throat, by your throat,
As of old in the terrible tale;
But he grapples you tight by the coat, by the coat,
Till its buttons and button-holes fail.

There 's the charm of a snake in his eye, in his eye,
And a polypus-grip in his hands;
You cannot go back, nor get by, nor get by,
If you look at the spot where he stands.

Oh, you 're grabbed! See his claw on your sleeve,
on your sleeve!
It is Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea!
You 're a Christian, no doubt you believe, you believe:
You 're a martyr, whatever you be!

Is the breakfast-hour past? They must wait,
they must wait,
While the coffee boils sullenly down,
While the Johnny-cake burns on the grate, on the
grate,
And the toast is done frightfully brown.

Yes, your dinner will keep; let it cool, let it cool,
And Madam may worry and fret,
And children half-starved go to school, go to school;
He can't think of sparing you yet.

Hark! the bell for the train! "Come along!
Come along!
For there is n't a second to lose."
"ALL ABOARD!" (He holds on.) "Fsht! ding-
dong! Fsht! ding-dong!" —
You can follow on foot, if you choose.

There 's a maid with a cheek like a peach, like
a peach,

That is waiting for you in the church; —
But he clings to your side like a leech, like a leech,
And you leave your lost bride in the lurch.

There 's a babe in a fit, — hurry quick! hurry quick!
To the doctor's as fast as you can!
The baby is off, while you stick, while you stick,
In the grip of the dreadful Old Man!

I have looked on the face of the Bore, of the Bore;
The voice of the Simple I know;
I have welcomed the Flat at my door, at my door;
I have sat by the side of the Slow;

I have walked like a lamb by the friend, by the friend,
That stuck to my skirts like a bur;
I have borne the stale talk without end, without end,
Of the sitter whom nothing could stir:

But my hamstrings grow loose, and I shake, and I shake,
At the sight of the dreadful Old Man;
Yea, I quiver and quake, and I take, and I take,
To my legs with what vigor I can!

Oh the dreadful Old Man of the Sea, of the Sea!
He 's come back like the Wandering Jew!
He has had his cold claw upon me, upon me, —
And be sure that he 'll have it on you!

INTERNATIONAL ODE

OUR FATHERS' LAND

God bless our Fathers' Land!
Keep her in heart and hand
One with our own!
From all her foes defend,
Be her brave People's Friend,
On all her realms descend,
Protect her Throne!

Father, with loving care
Guard Thou her kingdom's Heir,
Guide all his ways:
Thine arm his shelter be,
From him by land and sea
Bid storm and danger flee,
Prolong his days!

Lord, let War's tempest cease,
Fold the whole Earth in peace
Under thy wings!
Make all thy nations one,
All hearts beneath the sun,
Till Thou shalt reign alone,
Great King of kings!

VIVE LA FRANCE

A SENTIMENT OFFERED AT THE DINNER TO H. I. H. THE PRINCE NAPOLEON, AT THE REVERE HOUSE, SEPTEMBER 25, 1861

THE land of sunshine and of song!
Her name your hearts divine;
To her the banquet's vows belong
Whose breasts have poured its wine;
Our trusty friend, our true ally
Through varied change and chance:
So, fill your flashing goblets high, —
I give you, VIVE LA FRANCE!

Above our hosts in triple folds
The selfsame colors spread,
Where Valor's faithful arm upholds
The blue, the white, the red;
Alike each nation's glittering crest
Reflects the morning's glance, —
Twin eagles, soaring east and west:
Once more, then, VIVE LA FRANCE!

Sister in trial! who shall count
Thy generous friendship's claim,
Whose blood ran mingling in the fount
That gave our land its name,
Till Yorktown saw in blended line
Our conquering arms advance,

And victory's double garlands twine
Our banners? VIVE LA FRANCE!

O land of heroes! in our need
One gift from Heaven we crave
To stanch these wounds that vainly bleed, —
The wise to lead the brave!
Call back one Captain of thy past
From glory's marble trance,
Whose name shall be a bugle-blast
To rouse us! VIVE LA FRANCE!

Pluck Condé's baton from the trench,
Wake up stout Charles Martel,
Or find some woman's hand to clench
The sword of La Pucelle!
Give us one hour of old Turenne, —
One lift of Bayard's lance, —
Nay, call Marengo's Chief again
To lead us! VIVE LA FRANCE!

Ah, hush! our welcome Guest shall hear
But sounds of peace and joy;
No angry echo vex thine ear,
Fair Daughter of Savoy!
Once more! the land of arms and arts,
Of glory, grace, romance;
Her love lies warm in all our hearts:
God bless her! VIVE LA FRANCE!

BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE

SHE has gone, — she has left us in passion and pride, —
Our stormy-browed sister, so long at our side!
She has torn her own star from our firmament's glow,
And turned on her brother the face of a foe!

Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
We can never forget that our hearts have been one, —
Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's name,
From the fountain of blood with the finger of flame!

You were always too ready to fire at a touch;
But we said, "She is hasty, — she does not mean much."
We have scowled, when you uttered some turbulent threat;
But Friendship still whispered, "Forgive and forget!"

Has our love all died out? Have its altars grown cold?
Has the curse come at last which the fathers foretold?
Then Nature must teach us the strength of the chain
That her petulant children would sever in vain.

They may fight till the buzzards are gorged with
their spoil,
Till the harvest grows black as it rots in the
soil,
Till the wolves and the catamounts troop from
their caves,
And the shark tracks the pirate, the lord of the
waves:

In vain is the strife! When its fury is past,
Their fortunes must flow in one channel at last,
As the torrents that rush from the mountains of
snow
Roll mingled in peace through the valleys below.

Our Union is river, lake, ocean, and sky:
Man breaks not the medal, when God cuts the
die!
Though darkened with sulphur, though cloven with
steel,
The blue arch will brighten, the waters will heal!

Oh, Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
There are battles with Fate that can never be
won!
The star-flowering banner must never be furled,
For its blossoms of light are the hope of the
world!

Go, then, our rash sister! afar and aloof,
Run wild in the sunshine away from our roof;

But when your heart aches and your feet have
grown sore,
Remember the pathway that leads to our door!

March 25, 1861.

POEMS OF THE CLASS OF '29

1851–1889

BILL AND JOE

COME, dear old comrade, you and I
Will steal an hour from days gone by,
The shining days when life was new,
And all was bright with morning dew,
The lusty days of long ago,
When you were Bill and I was Joe.

Your name may flaunt a titled trail
Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail,
And mine as brief appendix wear
As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare;
To-day, old friend, remember still
That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You 've won the great world's envied prize,
And grand you look in people's eyes,
With H O N. and L L. D.
In big brave letters, fair to see, —
Your fist, old fellow! off they go! —
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You 've worn the judge's ermined robe;
You 've taught your name to half the globe;
You 've sung mankind a deathless strain;
You 've made the dead past live again:
The world may call you what it will,
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say
"See those old buffers, bent and gray, —
They talk like fellows in their teens!
Mad, poor old boys! That 's what it means," —
And shake their heads; they little know
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe! —

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,
While Joe sits smiling at his side;
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes, —
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame?
A fitful tongue of leaping flame;
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust;
A few swift years, and who can show
Which dust was Bill and which was Joe?

The weary idol takes his stand,
Holds out his bruised and aching hand,
While gaping thousands come and go, —
How vain it seems, this empty show!

W. T. SMEDLEY

Till all at once his pulses thrill; —
'T is poor old Joe's "God bless you, Bill!"

And shall we breathe in happier spheres
The names that pleased our mortal ears;
In some sweet lull of harp and song
For earth-born spirits none too long,
Just whispering of the world below
Where this was Bill and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here
No sounding name is half so dear;
When fades at length our lingering day,
Who cares what pompous tombstones say?
Read on the hearts that love us still,
Hic jacet Joe. *Hic jacet* Bill.

A SONG OF "TWENTY-NINE"

1851

THE summer dawn is breaking
  On Auburn's tangled bowers,
The golden light is waking
  On Harvard's ancient towers;
    The sun is in the sky
    That must see us do or die,
  Ere it shine on the line
    Of the CLASS OF '29.

At last the day is ended,
  The tutor screws no more,

By doubt and fear attended
Each hovers round the door,
Till the good old Præses cries,
While the tears stand in his eyes,
"You have passed, and are classed
With the Boys of '29."

Not long are they in making
The college halls their own,
Instead of standing shaking,
Too bashful to be known;
But they kick the Seniors' shins
Ere the second week begins,
When they stray in the way
Of the Boys of '29.

If a jolly set is trolling
The last *Der Freischutz* airs,
Or a "cannon bullet" rolling
Comes bouncing down the stairs,
The tutors, looking out,
Sigh, "Alas! there is no doubt,
'T is the noise of the Boys
Of the Class of '29."

Four happy years together,
By storm and sunshine tried,
In changing wind and weather,
They rough it side by side,
Till they hear their Mother cry,
"You are fledged, and you must fly,"
And the bell tolls the knell
Of the days of '29.

Since then, in peace or trouble,
Full many a year has rolled,
And life has counted double
The days that then we told;
Yet we 'll end as we 've begun,
For though scattered, we are one,
While each year sees us here,
Round the board of '29.

Though fate may throw between us
The mountains or the sea,
No time shall ever wean us,
No distance set us free;
But around the yearly board,
When the flaming pledge is poured,
It shall claim every name
On the roll of '29.

To yonder peaceful ocean
That glows with sunset fires,
Shall reach the warm emotion
This welcome day inspires,
Beyond the ridges cold
Where a brother toils for gold,
Till it shine through the mine
Round the Boy of '29.

If one whom fate has broken
Shall lift a moistened eye,
We 'll say, before he 's spoken —
"Old Classmate, don't you cry!
Here, take the purse I hold,
There 's a tear upon the gold —

It was mine — it is thine —
A'n't we Boys of '29?"

As nearer still and nearer
The fatal stars appear,
The living shall be dearer
With each encircling year,
Till a few old men shall say,
"We remember 't is the day —
Let it pass with a glass
For the Class of '29."

As one by one is falling
Beneath the leaves or snows,
Each memory still recalling,
The broken ring shall close,
Till the nightwinds softly pass
O'er the green and growing grass,
Where it waves on the graves
Of the Boys of '29!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1852

Where, oh where are the visions of morning,
Fresh as the dews of our prime?
Gone, like tenants that quit without warning,
Down the back entry of time.

Where, oh where are life's lilies and roses,
Nursed in the golden dawn's smile?

Dead as the bulrushes round little Moses,
On the old banks of the Nile.

Where are the Marys, and Anns, and Elizas,
Loving and lovely of yore?
Look in the columns of old Advertisers, —
Married and dead by the score.

Where the gray colts and the ten-year-old fillies,
Saturday's triumph and joy?
Gone, like our friend πόδας ὠκὺς Achilles,
Homer's ferocious old boy.

Die-away dreams of ecstatic emotion,
Hopes like young eagles at play,
Vows of unheard-of and endless devotion,
How ye have faded away!

Yet, through the ebbing of Time's mighty river
Leave our young blossoms to die,
Let him roll smooth in his current forever,
Till the last pebble is dry.

AN IMPROMPTU

Not premeditated

1853

The clock has struck noon; ere it thrice tell the hours
We shall meet round the table that blushes with flowers,

And I shall blush deeper with shame-driven blood
That I came to the banquet and brought not a bud.

Who cares that his verse is a beggar in art
If you see through its rags the full throb of his heart?
Who asks if his comrade is battered and tanned
When he feels his warm soul in the clasp of his hand?

No! be it an epic, or be it a line,
The Boys will all love it because it is mine;
I sung their last song on the morn of the day
That tore from their lives the last blossom of May.

It is not the sunset that glows in the wine,
But the smile that beams over it, makes it divine;
I scatter these drops, and behold, as they fall,
The day-star of memory shines through them all!

And these are the last; they are drops that I stole
From a wine-press that crushes the life from the soul,
But they ran through my heart and they sprang to my brain
Till our twentieth sweet summer was smiling again!

THE OLD MAN DREAMS

1854

Oh for one hour of youthful joy!
Give back my twentieth spring!
I 'd rather laugh, a bright-haired boy,
Than reign, a gray-beard king.

Off with the spoils of wrinkled age!
Away with Learning's crown!
Tear out life's Wisdom-written page,
And dash its trophies down!

One moment let my life-blood stream
From boyhood's fount of flame!
Give me one giddy, reeling dream
Of life all love and fame!

My listening angel heard the prayer,
And, calmly smiling, said,
"If I but touch thy silvered hair
Thy hasty wish hath sped.

"But is there nothing in thy track,
To bid thee fondly stay,
While the swift seasons hurry back
To find the wished-for day?"

"Ah, truest soul of womankind!
Without thee what were life?
One bliss I cannot leave behind:
I 'll take — my — precious — wife!"

The angel took a sapphire pen
And wrote in rainbow dew,
The man would be a boy again,
And be a husband too!

"And is there nothing yet unsaid,
Before the change appears?
Remember, all their gifts have fled
With those dissolving years."

"Why, yes;" for memory would recall
My fond paternal joys;
"I could not bear to leave them all —
I 'll take — my — girl — and — boys."

The smiling angel dropped his pen, —
"Why, this will never do;
The man would be a boy again,
And be a father too!"

And so I laughed, — my laughter woke
The household with its noise, —
And wrote my dream, when morning broke,
To please the gray-haired boys.

REMEMBER — FORGET

1855

And what shall be the song to-night,
If song there needs must be?
If every year that brings us here
Must steal an hour from me?

Say, shall it ring a merry peal,
Or heave a mourning sigh
O'er shadows cast, by years long past,
On moments flitting by?

Nay, take the first unbidden line
The idle hour may send,
No studied grace can mend the face
That smiles as friend on friend;
The balsam oozes from the pine,
The sweetness from the rose,
And so, unsought, a kindly thought
Finds language as it flows.

The years rush by in sounding flight,
I hear their ceaseless wings;
Their songs I hear, some far, some near,
And thus the burden rings:
"The morn has fled, the noon has past,
The sun will soon be set,
The twilight fade to midnight shade;
Remember — and Forget!"

Remember all that time has brought —
The starry hope on high,
The strength attained, the courage gained,
The love that cannot die.
Forget the bitter, brooding thought, —
The word too harshly said,
The living blame love hates to name,
The frailties of the dead!

We have been younger, so they say,
But let the seasons roll,
He doth not lack an almanac
Whose youth is in his soul.
The snows may clog life's iron track,
But does the axle tire,
While bearing swift through bank and drift
The engine's heart of fire?

I lift a goblet in my hand;
If good old wine it hold,
An ancient skin to keep it in
Is just the thing, we 're told.
We 're grayer than the dusty flask,—
We 're older than our wine;
Our corks reveal the "white top" seal,
The stamp of '29.

Ah, Boys! we clustered in the dawn,
To sever in the dark;
A merry crew, with loud halloo,
We climbed our painted bark;
We sailed her through the four years' cruise,
We 'll sail her to the last,
Our dear old flag, though but a rag,
Still flying on her mast.

So gliding on, each winter's gale
Shall pipe us all on deck,
Till, faint and few, the gathering crew
Creep o'er the parting wreck,

Her sails and streamers spread aloft
To fortune's rain or shine,
Till storm or sun shall all be one,
And down goes TWENTY-NINE!

OUR INDIAN SUMMER

1856

YOU 'll believe me, dear boys, 't is a pleasure to rise,
With a welcome like this in your darling old eyes;
To meet the same smiles and to hear the same tone
Which have greeted me oft in the years that have flown.

Were I gray as the grayest old rat in the wall,
My locks would turn brown at the sight of you all;
If my heart were as dry as the shell on the sand,
It would fill like the goblet I hold in my hand.

There are noontides of autumn when summer returns.
Though the leaves are all garnered and sealed in their urns,
And the bird on his perch, that was silent so long,
Believes the sweet sunshine and breaks into song.

We have caged the young birds of our beautiful June;
Their plumes are still bright and their voices in tune;

One moment of sunshine from faces like these
And they sing as they sung in the green-growing trees.

The voices of morning! how sweet is their thrill
When the shadows have turned, and the evening grows still!
The text of our lives may get wiser with age,
But the print was so fair on its twentieth page!

Look off from your goblet and up from your plate,
Come, take the last journal, and glance at its date:
Then think what we fellows should say and should do,
If the 6 were a 9 and the 5 were a 2.

Ah, no! for the shapes that would meet with us here,
From the far land of shadows, are ever too dear!
Though youth flung around us its pride and its charms,
We should see but the comrades we clasped in our arms.

A health to our future — a sigh for our past,
We love, we remember, we hope to the last;
And for all the base lies that the almanacs hold,
While we 've youth in our hearts we can never grow old!

MARE RUBRUM

1858

Flash out a stream of blood-red wine,
For I would drink to other days,
And brighter shall their memory shine,
Seen flaming through its crimson blaze!
The roses die, the summers fade,
But every ghost of boyhood's dream
By nature's magic power is laid
To sleep beneath this blood-red stream!

It filled the purple grapes that lay,
And drank the splendors of the sun,
Where the long summer's cloudless day
Is mirrored in the broad Garonne;
It pictures still the bacchant shapes
That saw their hoarded sunlight shed, —
The maidens dancing on the grapes, —
Their milk-white ankles splashed with red.

Beneath these waves of crimson lie,
In rosy fetters prisoned fast,
Those flitting shapes that never die, —
The swift-winged visions of the past.
Kiss but the crystal's mystic rim,
Each shadow rends its flowery chain,
Springs in a bubble from its brim,
And walks the chambers of the brain.

Poor beauty! Time and fortune's wrong
No shape nor feature may withstand;

Thy wrecks are scattered all along,
  Like emptied sea-shells on the sand;
Yet, sprinkled with this blushing rain,
  The dust restores each blooming girl,
As if the sea-shells moved again
  Their glistening lips of pink and pearl.

Here lies the home of school-boy life,
  With creaking stair and wind-swept hall,
And, scarred by many a truant knife,
  Our old initials on the wall;
Here rest, their keen vibrations mute,
  The shout of voices known so well,
The ringing laugh, the wailing flute,
  The chiding of the sharp-tongued bell.

Here, clad in burning robes, are laid
  Life's blossomed joys, untimely shed,
And here those cherished forms have strayed
  We miss awhile, and call them dead.
What wizard fills the wondrous glass?
  What soil the enchanted clusters grew?
That buried passions wake and pass
  In beaded drops of fiery dew?

Nay, take the cup of blood-red wine, —
  Our hearts can boast a warmer glow,
Filled from a vintage more divine,
  Calmed, but not chilled, by winter's snow!
To-night the palest wave we sip
  Rich as the priceless draught shall be
That wet the bride of Cana's lip, —
  The wedding wine of Galilee!

THE BOYS

1859

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.
Hang the Almanac's cheat and the Catalogue's spite!
Old Time is a liar! We 're twenty to-night!

We 're twenty! We 're twenty! Who says we are more?
He 's tipsy, — young jackanapes! — show him the door!
"Gray temples at twenty?" — Yes! *white* if we please;
Where the snow-flakes fall thickest there 's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!
Look close, — you will see not a sign of a flake!
We want some new garlands for those we have shed, —
And these are white roses in place of the red.

We 've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,
Of talking (in public) as if we were old: —
That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge;"
It 's a neat little fiction, — of course it 's all fudge.

That fellow 's the "Speaker," — the one on the right;
"Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you to-night?
That 's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;
There 's the "Reverend" What 's his name? — don't make me laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look
Made believe he had written a wonderful book,
And the ROYAL SOCIETY thought it was *true!*
So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There 's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain,
That could harness a team with a logical chain;
When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,
We called him "The Justice," but now he 's "The Squire."

And there 's a nice youngster of excellent pith, —
Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith;
But he shouted a song for the brave and the free, —
Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

You hear that boy laughing? — You think he 's all fun;
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call,
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we 're boys, — always playing with tongue or with pen,—
And I sometimes have asked, — Shall we ever be men?
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away?

Then here 's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,
Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

LINES

1860

I 'M ashamed, — that 's the fact, — it 's a pitiful case, —
Won't any kind classmate get up in my place?
Just remember how often I 've risen before, —
I blush as I straighten my legs on the floor!

There are stories, once pleasing, too many times told, —
There are beauties once charming, too fearfully old, —
There are voices we 've heard till we know them so well,
Though they talked for an hour they 'd have nothing to tell.

Yet, Classmates! Friends! Brothers! Dear blessed
old boys!
Made one by a lifetime of sorrows and joys,
What lips have such sounds as the poorest of these,
Though honeyed, like Plato's, by musical bees?

What voice is so sweet and what greeting so dear
As the simple, warm welcome that waits for us
here?
The love of our boyhood still breathes in its tone,
And our hearts throb the answer, "He 's one of our
own!"

Nay! count not our numbers; some sixty we know,
But these are above, and those under the snow;
And thoughts are still mingled wherever we meet
For those we remember with those that we greet.

We have rolled on life's journey, — how fast and
how far!
One round of humanity's many-wheeled car,
But up-hill and down-hill, through rattle and rub,
Old, true Twenty-niners! we 've stuck to our hub!

While a brain lives to think, or a bosom to feel,
We will cling to it still like the spokes of a wheel!
And age, as it chills us, shall fasten the tire
That youth fitted round in his circle of fire!

A VOICE OF THE LOYAL NORTH

1861

(JANUARY THIRD)

We sing "Our Country's" song to-night
With saddened voice and eye;
Her banner droops in clouded light
Beneath the wintry sky.
We 'll pledge her once in golden wine
Before her stars have set:
Though dim one reddening orb may shine,
We have a Country yet.

'T were vain to sigh o'er errors past,
The fault of sires or sons;
Our soldier heard the threatening blast,
And spiked his useless guns;
He saw the star-wreathed ensign fall,
By mad invaders torn;
But saw it from the bastioned wall
That laughed their rage to scorn!

What though their angry cry is flung
Across the howling wave, —
They smite the air with idle tongue
The gathering storm who brave;
Enough of speech! the trumpet rings;
Be silent, patient, calm, —
God help them if the tempest swings
The pine against the palm!

Our toilsome years have made us tame;
  Our strength has slept unfelt;
The furnace-fire is slow to flame
  That bids our ploughshares melt;
'T is hard to lose the bread they win
  In spite of Nature's frowns, —
To drop the iron threads we spin
  That weave our web of towns,

To see the rusting turbines stand
  Before the emptied flumes,
To fold the arms that flood the land
  With rivers from their looms, —
But harder still for those who learn
  The truth forgot so long;
When once their slumbering passions burn,
  The peaceful are the strong!

The Lord have mercy on the weak,
  And calm their frenzied ire,
And save our brothers ere they shriek,
  "We played with Northern fire!"
The eagle hold his mountain height, —
  The tiger pace his den!
Give all their country, each his right!
  God keep us all! Amen!

J. D. R.

1862

THE friends that are, and friends that were,
What shallow waves divide!
I miss the form for many a year
Still seated at my side.

I miss him, yet I feel him still
Amidst our faithful band,
As if not death itself could chill
The warmth of friendship's hand.

His story other lips may tell, —
For me the veil is drawn;
I only knew he loved me well,
He loved me — and is gone!

VOYAGE OF THE GOOD SHIP UNION

1862

'T IS midnight: through my troubled dream
Loud wails the tempest's cry;
Before the gale, with tattered sail,
A ship goes plunging by.
What name? Where bound? — The rocks around
Repeat the loud halloo.
—The good ship Union, Southward bound:
God help her and her crew!

And is the old flag flying still
That o'er your fathers flew,
With bands of white and rosy light,
And field of starry blue?
— Ay! look aloft! its folds full oft
Have braved the roaring blast,
And still shall fly when from the sky
This black typhoon has past!

Speak, pilot of the storm-tost bark!
May I thy peril share?
— O landsman, there are fearful seas
The brave alone may dare!
— Nay, ruler of the rebel deep,
What matters wind or wave?
The rocks that wreck your reeling deck
Will leave me naught to save!

O landsman, art thou false or true?
What sign hast thou to show?
— The crimson stains from loyal veins
That hold my heart-blood's flow!
— Enough! what more shall honor claim?
I know the sacred sign;
Above thy head our flag shall spread,
Our ocean path be thine!

The bark sails on; the Pilgrim's Cape
Lies low along her lee,
Whose headland crooks its anchor-flukes
To lock the shore and sea.
No treason here! it cost too dear
To win this barren realm!

And true and free the hands must be
That hold the whaler's helm!

Still on! Manhattan's narrowing bay
No rebel cruiser scars;
Her waters feel no pirate's keel
That flaunts the fallen stars!
— But watch the light on yonder height, —
Ay, pilot, have a care!
Some lingering cloud in mist may shroud
The capes of Delaware!

Say, pilot, what this fort may be,
Whose sentinels look down
From moated walls that show the sea
Their deep embrasures' frown?
The Rebel host claims all the coast,
But these are friends, we know,
Whose footprints spoil the "sacred soil,"
And this is? — Fort Monroe!

The breakers roar, — how bears the shore?
— The traitorous wreckers' hands
Have quenched the blaze that poured its rays
Along the Hatteras sands.
— Ha! say not so! I see its glow!
Again the shoals display
The beacon light that shines by night,
The Union Stars by day!

The good ship flies to milder skies,
The wave more gently flows,

The softening breeze wafts o'er the seas
The breath of Beaufort's rose.
What fold is this the sweet winds kiss,
Fair-striped and many-starred,
Whose shadow palls these orphaned walls,
The twins of Beauregard?

What! heard you not Port Royal's doom?
How the black war-ships came
And turned the Beaufort roses' bloom
To redder wreaths of flame?
How from Rebellion's broken reed
We saw his emblem fall,
As soon his cursèd poison-weed
Shall drop from Sumter's wall?

On! on! Pulaski's iron hail
Falls harmless on Tybee!
The good ship feels the freshening gales,
She strikes the open sea;
She rounds the point, she threads the keys
That guard the Land of Flowers,
And rides at last where firm and fast
Her own Gibraltar towers!

The good ship Union's voyage is o'er,
At anchor safe she swings,
And loud and clear with cheer on cheer
Her joyous welcome rings:
Hurrah! Hurrah! it shakes the wave,
It thunders on the shore, —
One flag, one land, one heart, one hand,
One Nation, evermore!

"CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE"

1863

YES, tyrants, you hate us, and fear while you hate
The self-ruling, chain-breaking, throne-shaking State!
The night-birds dread morning, — your instinct is true, —
The day-star of Freedom brings midnight for you!

Why plead with the deaf for the cause of mankind?
The owl hoots at noon that the eagle is blind!
We ask not your reasons, — 't were wasting our time, —
Our life is a menace, our welfare a crime!

We have battles to fight, we have foes to subdue, —
Time waits not for us, and we wait not for you!
The mower mows on, though the adder may writhe
And the copper-head coil round the blade of his scythe!

"No sides in this quarrel," your statesmen may urge,
Of school-house and wages with slave-pen and scourge! —
No sides in the quarrel! proclaim it as well
To the angels that fight with the legions of hell!

They kneel in God's temple, the North and the South,

With blood on each weapon and prayers in each
mouth.
Whose cry shall be answered? Ye Heavens, at-
tend
The lords of the lash as their voices ascend!

"O Lord, we are shaped in the image of Thee, —
Smite down the base millions that claim to be free,
And lend thy strong arm to the soft-handed race
Who eat *not* their bread in the sweat of their
face!"

So pleads the proud planter. What echoes are
these?
The bay of his bloodhound is borne on the breeze,
And, lost in the shriek of his victim's despair,
His voice dies unheard. — Hear the Puritan's
prayer!

"O Lord, that didst smother mankind in thy flood,
The sun is as sackcloth, the moon is as blood,
The stars fall to earth as untimely are cast
The figs from the fig-tree that shakes in the blast!

"All nations, all tribes in whose nostrils is breath
Stand gazing at Sin as she travails with Death!
Lord, strangle the monster that struggles to birth,
Or mock us no more with thy 'Kingdom on
Earth!'

"If Ammon and Moab must reign in the land
Thou gavest thine Israel, fresh from thy hand,

Call Baäl and Ashtaroth out of their graves
To be the new gods for the empire of slaves!"

Whose God will ye serve, O ye rulers of men?
Will ye build you new shrines in the slave-breeder's den?
Or bow with the children of light, as they call
On the Judge of the Earth and the Father of All?

Choose wisely, choose quickly, for time moves apace, —
Each day is an age in the life of our race!
Lord, lead them in love, ere they hasten in fear
From the fast-rising flood that shall girdle the sphere!

F. W. C.

1864

Fast as the rolling seasons bring
The hour of fate to those we love,
Each pearl that leaves the broken string
Is set in Friendship's crown above.
As narrower grows the earthly chain,
The circle widens in the sky;
These are our treasures that remain,
But those are stars that beam on high.

We miss — oh, how we miss! — *his* face, —
With trembling accents speak his name.
Earth cannot fill his shadowed place
From all her rolls of pride and fame;

Our song has lost the silvery thread
That carolled through his jocund lips;
Our laugh is mute, our smile is fled,
And all our sunshine in eclipse.

And what and whence the wondrous charm
That kept his manhood boylike still, —
That life's hard censors could disarm
And lead them captive at his will?
His heart was shaped of rosier clay, —
His veins were filled with ruddier fire, —
Time could not chill him, fortune sway,
Nor toil with all its burdens tire.

His speech burst throbbing from its fount
And set our colder thoughts aglow,
As the hot leaping geysers mount
And falling melt the Iceland snow.
Some word, perchance, we counted rash, —
Some phrase our calmness might disclaim,
Yet 't was the sunset's lightning's flash,
No angry bolt, but harmless flame.

Man judges all, God knoweth each;
We read the rule, He sees the law;
How oft his laughing children teach
The truths his prophets never saw!
O friend, whose wisdom flowered in mirth,
Our hearts are sad, our eyes are dim;
He gave thy smiles to brighten earth, —
We trust thy joyous soul to Him!

Alas! — our weakness Heaven forgive!
We murmur, even while we trust,
"How long earth's breathing burdens live,
Whose hearts, before they die, are dust!"
But thou! — through grief's untimely tears
We ask with half-reproachful sigh —
"Couldst thou not watch a few brief years
Till Friendship faltered, 'Thou mayst die'?"

Who loved our boyish years so well?
Who knew so well their pleasant tales,
And all those livelier freaks could tell
Whose oft-told story never fails?
In vain we turn our aching eyes, —
In vain we stretch our eager hands, —
Cold in his wintry shroud he lies
Beneath the dreary drifting sands!

Ah, speak not thus! *He* lies not there!
We see him, hear him as of old!
He comes! He claims his wonted chair;
His beaming face we still behold!
His voice rings clear in all our songs,
And loud his mirthful accents rise;
To us our brother's life belongs, —
Dear friends, a classmate never dies!

THE LAST CHARGE

1864

Now, men of the North! will you join in the strife
For country, for freedom, for honor, for life?
The giant grows blind in his fury and spite, —
One blow on his forehead will settle the fight!

Flash full in his eyes the blue lightning of steel,
And stun him with cannon-bolts, peal upon peal!
Mount, troopers, and follow your game to its lair,
As the hound tracks the wolf and the beagle the hare!

Blow, trumpets, your summons, till sluggards awake!
Beat, drums, till the roofs of the faint-hearted shake!
Yet, yet, ere the signet is stamped on the scroll,
Their names may be traced on the blood-sprinkled roll!

Trust not the false herald that painted your shield:
True honor *to-day* must be sought on the field!
Her scutcheon shows white with a blazon of red, —
The life-drops of crimson for liberty shed!

The hour is at hand, and the moment draws nigh;
The dog-star of treason grows dim in the sky;

Shine forth from the battle-cloud, light of the morn,
Call back the bright hour when the Nation was born!

The rivers of peace through our valleys shall run,
As the glaciers of tyranny melt in the sun;
Smite, smite the proud parricide down from his throne, —
His sceptre once broken, the world is our own!

OUR OLDEST FRIEND

1865

I GIVE you the health of the oldest friend
That, short of eternity, earth can lend, —
A friend so faithful and tried and true
That nothing can wean him from me and you.

When first we screeched in the sudden blaze
Of the daylight's blinding and blasting rays,
And gulped at the gaseous, groggy air,
This old, old friend stood waiting there.

And when, with a kind of mortal strife,
We had gasped and choked into breathing life,
He watched by the cradle, day and night,
And held our hands till we stood upright.

From gristle and pulp our frames have grown
To stringy muscle and solid bone;

While we were changing, he altered not;
We might forget, but he never forgot.

He came with us to the college class, —
Little cared he for the steward's pass!
All the rest must pay their fee,
But the grim old dead-head entered free.

He stayed with us while we counted o'er
Four times each of the seasons four;
And with every season, from year to year,
The dear name Classmate he made more dear.

He never leaves us, — he never will,
Till our hands are cold and our hearts are still;
On birthdays, and Christmas, and New-Year's too,
He always remembers both me and you.

Every year this faithful friend
His little present is sure to send;
Every year, wheresoe'er we be,
He wants a keepsake from you and me.

How he loves us! he pats our heads,
And, lo! they are gleaming with silver threads;
And he 's always begging one lock of hair,
Till our shining crowns have nothing to wear.

At length he will tell us, one by one,
"My child, your labor on earth is done;
And now you must journey afar to see
My elder brother, — Eternity!"

And so, when long, long years have passed,
Some dear old fellow will be the last, —
Never a boy alive but he
Of all our goodly company!

When he lies down, but not till then,
Our kind Class-Angel will drop the pen
That writes in the day-book kept above
Our lifelong record of faith and love.

So here 's a health in homely rhyme
To our oldest classmate, Father Time!
May our last survivor live to be
As bald and as wise and as tough as he!

SHERMAN 'S IN SAVANNAH

A HALF-RHYMED IMPROMPTU

1865

LIKE the tribes of Israel,
Fed on quails and manna,
Sherman and his glorious band
Journeyed through the rebel land,
Fed from Heaven's all-bounteous hand,
Marching on Savannah!

As the moving pillar shone,
Streamed the starry banner
All day long in rosy light,
Flaming splendor all the night,

Till it swooped in eagle flight
Down on doomed Savannah!

Glory be to God on high!
Shout the loud Hosanna!
Treason's wilderness is past,
Canaan's shore is won at last,
Peal a nation's trumpet-blast, —
Sherman 's in Savannah!

Soon shall Richmond's tough old hide
Find a tough old tanner!
Soon from every rebel wall
Shall the rag of treason fall,
Till our banner flaps o'er all
As it crowns Savannah!

MY ANNUAL

1866

How long will this harp which you once loved to hear
Cheat your lips of a smile or your eyes of a tear?
How long stir the echoes it wakened of old,
While its strings were unbroken, untarnished its gold?

Dear friends of my boyhood, my words do you wrong;
The heart, the heart only, shall throb in my song;

It reads the kind answer that looks from your
eyes, —
"We will bid our old harper play on till he dies."

Though Youth, the fair angel that looked o'er the
strings,
Has lost the bright glory that gleamed on his
wings,
Though the freshness of morning has passed from
its tone,
It is still the old harp that was always your own.

I claim not its music, — each note it affords
I strike from your heart-strings, that lend me its
chords;
I know you will listen and love to the last,
For it trembles and thrills with the voice of your
past.

Ah, brothers! dear brothers! the harp that I hold
No craftsman could string and no artisan mould;
He shaped it, He strung it, who fashioned the lyres
That ring with the hymns of the seraphim choirs.

Not mine are the visions of beauty it brings,
Not mine the faint fragrance around it that clings;
Those shapes are the phantoms of years that are
fled,
Those sweets breathe from roses your summers
have shed.

Each hour of the past lends its tribute to this,
Till it blooms like a bower in the Garden of Bliss;

The thorn and the thistle may grow as they will,
Where Friendship unfolds there is Paradise still.

The bird wanders careless while summer is green,
The leaf-hidden cradle that rocked him unseen;
When Autumn's rude fingers the woods have undressed,
The boughs may look bare, but they show him his nest.

Too precious these moments! the lustre they fling
Is the light of our year, is the gem of its ring,
So brimming with sunshine, we almost forget
The rays it has lost, and its border of jet.

While round us the many-hued halo is shed,
How dear are the living, how near are the dead!
One circle, scarce broken, these waiting below,
Those walking the shores where the asphodels blow!

Not life shall enlarge it nor death shall divide, —
No brother new-born finds his place at my side;
No titles shall freeze us, no grandeurs infest,
His Honor, His Worship, are boys like the rest.

Some won the world's homage, their names we hold dear, —
But Friendship, not Fame, is the countersign here;
Make room by the conqueror crowned in the strife
For the comrade that limps from the battle of life!

What tongue talks of battle? Too long we have heard

In sorrow, in anguish, that terrible word;
It reddened the sunshine, it crimsoned the wave,
It sprinkled our doors with the blood of our brave.

Peace, Peace comes at last, with her garland of white;
Peace broods in all hearts as we gather to-night;
The blazon of Union spreads full in the sun;
We echo its words, — We are one! We are one!

ALL HERE

1867

It is not what we say or sing,
That keeps our charm so long unbroken,
Though every lightest leaf we bring
May touch the heart as friendship's token;
Not what we sing or what we say
Can make us dearer to each other;
We love the singer and his lay,
But love as well the silent brother.

Yet bring whate'er your garden grows,
Thrice welcome to our smiles and praises;
Thanks for the myrtle and the rose,
Thanks for the marigolds and daisies;
One flower erelong we all shall claim,
Alas! unloved of Amaryllis —
Nature's last blossom — need I name
The wreath of threescore's silver lilies?

How many, brothers, meet to-night
  Around our boyhood's covered embers?
Go read the treasured names aright
  The old triennial list remembers;
Though twenty wear the starry sign
  That tells a life has broke its tether,
The fifty-eight of 'twenty-nine —
  God bless THE BOYS! — are all together!

These come with joyous look and word,
  With friendly grasp and cheerful greeting, —
Those smile unseen, and move unheard,
  The angel guests of every meeting;
They cast no shadow in the flame
  That flushes from the gilded lustre,
But count us — we are still the same;
  One earthly band, one heavenly cluster!

Love dies not when he bows his head
  To pass beyond the narrow portals, —
The light these glowing moments shed
  Wakes from their sleep our lost immortals;
They come as in their joyous prime,
  Before their morning days were numbered, —
Death stays the envious hand of Time, —
  The eyes have not grown dim that slumbered!

The paths that loving souls have trod
  Arch o'er the dust where worldlings grovel
High as the zenith o'er the sod, —
  The cross above the sexton's shovel!

We rise beyond the realms of day;
They seem to stoop from spheres of glory
With us one happy hour to stray,
While youth comes back in song and story.

Ah! ours is friendship true as steel
That war has tried in edge and temper;
It writes upon its sacred seal
The priest's *ubique — omnes — semper!*
It lends the sky a fairer sun
That cheers our lives with rays as steady
As if our footsteps had begun
To print the golden streets already!

The tangling years have clinched its knot
Too fast for mortal strength to sunder;
The lightning bolts of noon are shot;
No fear of evening's idle thunder!
Too late! too late! — no graceless hand
Shall stretch its cords in vain endeavor
To rive the close encircling band
That made and keeps us one forever!

So when upon the fated scroll
The falling stars have all descended,
And, blotted from the breathing roll,
Our little page of life is ended,
We ask but one memorial line
Traced on thy tablet, Gracious Mother:
"My children. Boys of '29.
In pace. How they loved each other!"

ONCE MORE

1868

"*Will I come?*" That *is* pleasant! I beg to inquire
If the gun that I carry has ever missed fire?
And which was the muster-roll — mention but one —
That missed your old comrade who carries the gun?

You see me as always, my hand on the lock,
The cap on the nipple, the hammer full cock;
It is rusty, some tell me; I heed not the scoff;
It is battered and bruised, but it always goes off!

"Is it loaded?" I 'll bet you! What does n't it hold?
Rammed full to the muzzle with memories untold;
Why, it scares me to fire, lest the pieces should fly
Like the cannons that burst on the Fourth of July!

One charge is a remnant of College-day dreams
(Its wadding is made of forensics and themes);
Ah, visions of fame! what a flash in the pan
As the trigger was pulled by each clever young man!

And love! Bless my stars, what a cartridge is there!
With a wadding of rose-leaves and ribbons and hair, —

All crammed in one verse to go off at a shot!
"Were there ever such sweethearts?" Of course
there were not!

And next, — what a load! it will split the old
gun, —
Three fingers, — four fingers, — five fingers of fun!
Come tell me, gray sages, for mischief and noise
Was there ever a lot like us fellows, "The Boys"?

Bump! bump! down the staircase the cannon-ball
goes, —
Aha, old Professor! Look out for your toes!
Don't think, my poor Tutor, to *sleep* in your
bed, —
Two "Boys" — 'twenty-niners — room over your
head!

Remember the nights when the tar-barrel blazed!
From red "Massachusetts" the war-cry was raised;
And "Hollis" and "Stoughton" reëchoed the
call;
Till P—— poked his head out of Holworthy Hall!

Old P——, as we called him, — at fifty or so, —
Not exactly a bud, but not quite in full blow;
In ripening manhood, suppose we should say,
Just nearing his prime, as we boys are to-day!

Oh say, can you look through the vista of age
To the time when old Morse drove the regular
stage?

When Lyon told tales of the long-vanished years,
And Lenox crept round with the rings in his ears?

And dost thou, my brother, remember indeed
The days of our dealings with Willard and Read?
When "Dolly" was kicking and running away,
And punch came up smoking on Fillebrown's tray?

But where are the Tutors, my brother, oh tell! —
And where the Professors, remembered so well?
The sturdy old Grecian of Holworthy Hall,
And Latin, and Logic, and Hebrew, and all?

"They are dead, the old fellows" (we called
them so then,
Though we since have found out they were lusty
young men).
They are *dead*, do you tell me? — but how do you
know?
You 've filled once too often. I doubt if it 's so.

I 'm thinking. I 'm thinking. Is this 'sixty-
eight?
It 's not quite so clear. It admits of debate.
I *may* have been dreaming. I rather incline
To think — yes, I 'm certain — it is 'twenty-nine!

"By Zhorzhe!" — as friend Sales is accustomed to
cry, —
You tell me they 're dead, but I know it 's a lie!
Is Jackson not President? — What was 't you said?
It can't be; you 're joking; what, — all of 'em
dead?

Jim, — Harry, — Fred, — Isaac, — all gone from
our side?
They could n't have left us, — no, not if they tried.
Look, — there 's our old Præses, — he can't find
his text;
See, — P—— rubs his leg, as he growls out
"*The next!*"

I told you 't was nonsense. Joe, give us a song!
Go harness up "Dolly," and fetch her along! —
Dead! Dead! You false graybeard, I swear
they are not!
Hurrah for Old Hickory! — Oh, I forgot!

Well, *one* we have with us (how could he contrive
To deal with us youngsters and still to survive?)
Who wore for our guidance authority's robe, —
No wonder he took to the study of Job!

And now, as my load was uncommonly large,
Let me taper it off with a classical charge;
When that has gone off, I shall drop my old gun —
And then stand at ease, for my service is done.

Bibamus ad Classem vocatam "The Boys"
Et eorum Tutorem cui nomen est "Noyes";
Et floreant, valeant, vigeant tam,
Non Peircius ipse enumeret quam!

THE OLD CRUISER

1869

HERE 's the old cruiser, 'Twenty-nine,
Forty times she 's crossed the line;
Same old masts and sails and crew,
Tight and tough and as good as new.

Into the harbor she bravely steers
Just as she 's done for these forty years, —
Over her anchor goes, splash and clang!
Down her sails drop, rattle and bang!

Comes a vessel out of the dock
Fresh and spry as a fighting-cock,
Feathered with sails and spurred with steam,
Heading out of the classic stream.

Crew of a hundred all aboard,
Every man as fine as a lord.
Gay they look and proud they feel,
Bowling along on even keel.

On they float with wind and tide, —
Gain at last the old ship's side;
Every man looks down in turn, —
Reads the name that 's on her stern.

"Twenty-nine! — *Diable* you say!
That was in Skipper Kirkland's day!
What was the Flying Dutchman's name?
This old rover must be the same.

"Ho! you Boatswain that walks the deck,
How does it happen you 're not a wreck?
One and another have come to grief,
How have you dodged by rock and reef?"

Boatswain, lifting one knowing lid,
Hitches his breeches and shifts his quid:
"Hey? What is it? Who 's come to grief?
Louder, young swab, I 'm a little deaf."

"I say, old fellow, what keeps your boat
With all you jolly old boys afloat,
When scores of vessels as good as she
Have swallowed the salt of the bitter sea?

"Many a crew from many a craft
Goes drifting by on a broken raft
Pieced from a vessel that clove the brine
Taller and prouder than 'Twenty-nine.

"Some capsized in an angry breeze,
Some were lost in the narrow seas,
Some on snags and some on sands
Struck and perished and lost their hands.

"Tell us young ones, you gray old man,
What is your secret, if you can.
We have a ship as good as you,
Show us how to keep our crew."

So in his ear the youngster cries;
Then the gray Boatswain straight replies: —

"All your crew be sure you know, —
Never let one of your shipmates go.

"If he leaves you, change your tack,
Follow him close and fetch him back;
When you 've hauled him in at last,
Grapple his flipper and hold him fast.

"If you 've wronged him, speak him fair,
Say you 're sorry and make it square;
If he 's wronged you, wink so tight
None of you see what 's plain in sight.

"When the world goes hard and wrong,
Lend a hand to help him along;
When his stockings have holes to darn,
Don't you grudge him your ball of yarn.

"Once in a twelvemonth, come what may,
Anchor your ship in a quiet bay,
Call all hands and read the log,
And give 'em a taste of grub and grog.

"Stick to each other through thick and thin;
All the closer as age leaks in;
Squalls will blow and clouds will frown,
But stay by your ship till you all go down!"

ADDED FOR THE ALUMNI MEETING, JUNE 29, 1869.

So the gray Boatswain of 'Twenty-nine
Piped to "The Boys" as they crossed the line;

Round the cabin sat thirty guests,
Babes of the nurse with a thousand breasts.

There were the judges, grave and grand,
Flanked by the priests on either hand;
There was the lord of wealth untold,
And the dear good fellow in broadcloth old.

Thirty men, from twenty towns,
Sires and grandsires with silvered crowns, —
Thirty school-boys all in a row, —
Bens and Georges and Bill and Joe.

In thirty goblets the wine was poured,
But threescore gathered around the board, —
For lo! at the side of every chair
A shadow hovered — we all were there!

HYMN FOR THE CLASS-MEETING

1869

Thou Gracious Power, whose mercy lends
The light of home, the smile of friends,
Our gathered flock thine arms infold
As in the peaceful days of old.

Wilt thou not hear us while we raise,
In sweet accord of solemn praise,
The voices that have mingled long
In joyous flow of mirth and song?

For all the blessings life has brought,
For all its sorrowing hours have taught,
For all we mourn, for all we keep,
The hands we clasp, the loved that sleep;

The noontide sunshine of the past,
These brief, bright moments fading fast,
The stars that gild our darkening years,
The twilight ray from holier spheres;

We thank thee, Father! let thy grace
Our narrowing circle still embrace,
Thy mercy shed its heavenly store,
Thy peace be with us evermore!

EVEN-SONG.

1870

It may be, yes, it must be, Time that brings
An end to mortal things,
That sends the beggar Winter in the train
Of Autumn's burdened wain, —
Time, that is heir of all our earthly state,
And knoweth well to wait
Till sea hath turned to shore and shore to sea,
If so it need must be,
Ere he make good his claim and call his own
Old empires overthrown, —
Time, who can find no heavenly orb too large
To hold its fee in charge,

Nor any motes that fill its beam so small,
  But he shall care for all, —
It may be, must be, — yes, he soon shall tire
  This hand that holds the lyre.

Then ye who listened in that earlier day
  When to my careless lay
I matched its chords and stole their first-born thrill,
  With untaught rudest skill
Vexing a treble from the slender strings
  Thin as the locust sings
When the shrill-crying child of summer's heat
  Pipes from its leafy seat,
The dim pavilion of embowering green
  Beneath whose shadowy screen
The small sopranist tries his single note
  Against the song-bird's throat,
And all the echoes listen, but in vain;
  They hear no answering strain, —
Then ye who listened in that earlier day
  Shall sadly turn away,

Saying, "The fire burns low, the hearth is cold
  That warmed our blood of old;
Cover its embers and its half-burnt brands,
  And let us stretch our hands
Over a brighter and fresh-kindled flame;
  Lo, this is not the same,
The joyous singer of our morning time,
  Flushed high with lusty rhyme!
Speak kindly, for he bears a human heart,
  But whisper him apart, —

Tell him the woods their autumn robes have shed
And all their birds have fled,
And shouting winds unbuild the naked nests
They warmed with patient breasts;
Tell him the sky is dark, the summer o'er,
And bid him sing no more!"

Ah, welladay! if words so cruel-kind
A listening ear might find!
But who that hears the music in his soul
Of rhythmic waves that roll
Crested with gleams of fire, and as they flow
Stir all the deeps below
Till the great pearls no calm might ever reach
Leap glistening on the beach,—
Who that has known the passion and the pain,
The rush through heart and brain,
The joy so like a pang his hand is pressed
Hard on his throbbing breast,
When thou, whose smile is life and bliss and fame
Hast set his pulse aflame,
Muse of the lyre! can say farewell to thee?
Alas! and must it be?

In many a clime, in many a stately tongue,
The mighty bards have sung;
To these the immemorial thrones belong
And purple robes of song;
Yet the slight minstrel loves the slender tone
His lips may call his own,
And finds the measure of the verse more sweet,
Timed by his pulse's beat,

Than all the hymnings of the laurelled throng.
Say not I do him wrong,
For Nature spoils her warblers, — them she feeds
In lotus-growing meads
And pours them subtle draughts from haunted streams
That fill their souls with dreams.

Full well I know the gracious mother's wiles
And dear delusive smiles!
No callow fledgling of her singing brood
But tastes that witching food,
And hearing overhead the eagle's wing,
And how the thrushes sing,
Vents his exiguous chirp, and from his nest
Flaps forth — we know the rest.
I own the weakness of the tuneful kind, —
Are not all harpers blind?
I sang too early, must I sing too late?
The lengthening shadows wait
The first pale stars of twilight, — yet how sweet
The flattering whisper's cheat, —
"Thou hast the fire no evening chill can tame,
Whose coals outlast its flame!"

Farewell, ye carols of the laughing morn,
Of earliest sunshine born!
The sower flings the seed and looks not back
Along his furrowed track;
The reaper leaves the stalks for other hands
To gird with circling bands;

The wind, earth's careless servant, truant-born,
Blows clean the beaten corn
And quits the thresher's floor, and goes his way
To sport with ocean's spray;
The headlong-stumbling rivulet scrambling down
To wash the sea-girt town,
Still babbling of the green and billowy waste
Whose salt he longs to taste,
Ere his warm wave its chilling clasp may feel
Has twirled the miller's wheel.

The song has done its task that makes us bold
With secrets else untold,—
And mine has run its errand; through the dews
I tracked the flying Muse;
The daughter of the morning touched my lips
With roseate finger-tips;
Whether I would or would not, I must sing
With the new choirs of spring;
Now, as I watch the fading autumn day
And trill my softened lay,
I think of all that listened, and of one
For whom a brighter sun
Dawned at high summer's noon. Ah, comrades dear,
Are not all gathered here?
Our hearts have answered. — Yes! they hear our call:
All gathered here! all! all!

THE SMILING LISTENER

1871

PRECISELY. I see it. You all want to say
That a tear is too sad and a laugh is too gay;
You could stand a faint smile, you could manage a sigh,
But you value your ribs, and you don't want to cry.

And why at our feast of the clasping of hands
Need we turn on the stream of our lachrymal glands?
Though we see the white breakers of age on our bow,
Let us take a good pull in the jolly-boat now!

It 's hard if a fellow cannot feel content
When a banquet like this does n't cost him a cent,
When his goblet and plate he may empty at will,
And our kind Class Committee will settle the bill.

And here 's your old friend, the identical bard
Who has rhymed and recited you verse by the yard
Since the days of the empire of Andrew the First
Till you 're full to the brim and feel ready to burst.

It 's awful to think of, — how year after year
With his piece in his pocket he waits for you here;
No matter who 's missing, there always is one
To lug out his manuscript, sure as a gun.

"Why won't he stop writing?" Humanity cries:
The answer is briefly, "He can't if he tries;
He has played with his foolish old feather so long,
That the goose-quill in spite of him cackles in song."

You have watched him with patience from morning to dusk
Since the tassel was bright o'er the green of the husk,
And now — it 's too bad — it 's a pitiful job —
He has shelled the ripe ear till he 's come to the cob.

I see one face beaming — it listens so well
There must be some music yet left in my shell —
The wine of my soul is not thick on the lees;
One string is unbroken, one friend I can please!

Dear comrade, the sunshine of seasons gone by
Looks out from your tender and tear-moistened eye,
A pharos of love on an ice-girdled coast, —
Kind soul! — Don't you hear me? — He 's deaf as a post!

Can it be one of Nature's benevolent tricks
That you grow hard of hearing as I grow prolix?
And that look of delight which would angels beguile
Is the deaf man's prolonged unintelligent smile?

Ah! the ear may grow dull, and the eye may wax dim,

But they still know a classmate — they can't mistake him;
There is something to tell us, "That 's one of our band,"
Though we groped in the dark for a touch of his hand.

Well, Time with his snuffers is prowling about
And his shaky old fingers will soon snuff us out;
There 's a hint for us all in each pendulum tick,
For we 're low in the tallow and long in the wick.

You remember Rossini — you 've been at the play?
How his overture-endings keep crashing away
Till you think, "It 's all over — it can't but stop now —
That 's the screech and the bang of the final bow-wow."

And you find you 're mistaken; there 's lots more to come,
More banging, more screeching of fiddle and drum,
Till when the last ending is finished and done,
You feel like a horse when the winning-post 's won.

So I, who have sung to you, merry or sad,
Since the days when they called me a promising lad,
Though I 've made you more rhymes than a tutor could scan,
Have a few more still left, like the razor-strop man.

Now pray don't be frightened — I 'm ready to stop
My galloping anapests' clatter and pop —
In fact, if you say so, retire from to-day
To the garret I left, on a poet's half-pay.

And yet — I can't help it — perhaps — who can tell?
You might miss the poor singer you treated so well,
And confess you could stand him five minutes or so,
"It was so like old times we remember, you know."

'T is not that the music can signify much,
But then there are chords that awake with a touch, —
And our hearts can find echoes of sorrow and joy
To the winch of the minstrel who hails from Savoy.

So this hand-organ tune that I cheerfully grind
May bring the old places and faces to mind,
And seen in the light of the past we recall
The flowers that have faded bloom fairest of all!

OUR SWEET SINGER

J. A.

1872

One memory trembles on our lips;
It throbs in every breast;
In tear-dimmed eyes, in mirth's eclipse,
The shadow stands confessed.

O silent voice, that cheered so long
Our manhood's marching day,
Without thy breath of heavenly song,
How weary seems the way!

Vain every pictured phrase to tell
Our sorrowing heart's desire,—
The shattered harp, the broken shell,
The silent unstrung lyre;

For youth was round us while he sang;
It glowed in every tone;
With bridal chimes the echoes rang,
And made the past our own.

Oh blissful dream! Our nursery joys
We know must have an end,
But love and friendship's broken toys
May God's good angels mend!

The cheering smile, the voice of mirth
And laughter's gay surprise
That please the children born of earth,
Why deem that Heaven denies?

Methinks in that refulgent sphere
That knows not sun or moon,
An earth-born saint might long to hear
One verse of "Bonny Doon";

Or walking through the streets of gold
In heaven's unclouded light,

His lips recall the song of old
And hum "The sky is bright."

And can we smile when thou art dead?
Ah, brothers, even so!
The rose of summer will be red,
In spite of winter's snow.

Thou wouldst not leave us all in gloom
Because thy song is still,
Nor blight the banquet-garland's bloom
With grief's untimely chill.

The sighing wintry winds complain, —
The singing bird has flown, —
Hark! heard I not that ringing strain,
That clear celestial tone?

How poor these pallid phrases seem,
How weak this tinkling line,
As warbles through my waking dream
That angel voice of thine!

Thy requiem asks a sweeter lay;
It falters on my tongue;
For all we vainly strive to say,
Thou shouldst thyself have sung!

H. C. M. H. S. J. K. W.

1873

THE dirge is played, the throbbing death-peal rung,
The sad-voiced requiem sung;
On each white urn where memory dwells
The wreath of rustling immortelles
Our loving hands have hung,
And balmiest leaves have strown and tenderest blossoms flung.

The birds that filled the air with songs have flown,
The wintry blasts have blown,
And these for whom the voice of spring
Bade the sweet choirs their carols sing
Sleep in those chambers lone
Where snows untrodden lie, unheard the night-winds moan.

We clasp them all in memory, as the vine
Whose running stems intwine
The marble shaft, and steal around
The lowly stone, the nameless mound;
With sorrowing hearts resign
Our brothers true and tried, and close our broken line.

How fast the lamps of life grow dim and die
Beneath our sunset sky!
Still fading, as along our track

We cast our saddened glances back,
And while we vainly sigh
The shadowy day recedes, the starry night draws nigh.

As when from pier to pier across the tide
With even keel we glide,
The lights we left along the shore
Grow less and less, while more, yet more
New vistas open wide
Of fair illumined streets and casements golden-eyed.

Each closing circle of our sunlit sphere
Seems to bring heaven more near:
Can we not dream that those we love
Are listening in the world above
And smiling as they hear
The voices known so well of friends that still are dear?

Does all that made us human fade away
With this dissolving clay?
Nay, rather deem the blessed isles
Are bright and gay with joyous smiles,
That angels have their play,
And saints that tire of song may claim their holiday.

All else of earth may perish; love alone
Not heaven shall find outgrown!

Are they not here, our spirit guests,
With love still throbbing in their breasts?
Once more let flowers be strown.
Welcome, ye shadowy forms, we count you still
our own!

WHAT I HAVE COME FOR

1873

I HAVE come with my verses — I think I may claim
It is not the first time I have tried on the same.
They were puckered in rhyme, they were wrinkled
in wit;
But your hearts were so large that they made them
a fit.

I have come — not to tease you with more of my
rhyme,
But to feel as I did in the blessed old time;
I want to hear him with the Brobdingnag laugh —
We count him at least as three men and a half.

I have come to meet judges so wise and so grand
That I shake in my shoes while they 're shaking my
hand;
And the prince among merchants who put back the
crown
When they tried to enthrone him the King of the
Town.

I have come to see George — Yes, I think there are
four,

If they all were like these I could wish there were more.
I have come to see one whom we used to call "Jim,"
I want to see — oh, don't I want to see him?

I have come to grow young — on my word I declare
I have thought I detected a change in my hair!
One hour with "The Boys" will restore it to brown —
And a wrinkle or two I expect to rub down.

Yes, that 's what I 've come for, as all of us come;
When I meet the dear Boys I could wish I were dumb.
You asked me, you know, but it 's spoiling the fun;
I have told what I came for; my ditty is done.

OUR BANKER

1874

Old Time, in whose bank we deposit our notes,
Is a miser who always wants guineas for groats;
He keeps all his customers still in arrears
By lending them minutes and charging them years.

The twelvemonth rolls round and we never forget
On the counter before us to pay him our debt.
We reckon the marks he has chalked on the door,
Pay up and shake hands and begin a new score.

How long he will lend us, how much we may owe,
No angel will tell us, no mortal may know.
At fivescore, at fourscore, at threescore and ten,
He may close the account with a stroke of his pen.

This only we know, — amid sorrows and joys
Old Time has been easy and kind with "The Boys."
Though he must have and will have and does have his pay,
We have found him good-natured enough in his way.

He never forgets us, as others will do, —
I am sure he knows me, and I think he knows you,
For I see on your foreheads a mark that he lends
As a sign he remembers to visit his friends.

In the shape of a classmate (a wig on his crown, —
His day-book and ledger laid carefully down)
He has welcomed us yearly, a glass in his hand,
And pledged the good health of our brotherly band.

He 's a thief, we must own, but how many there be
That rob us less gently and fairly than he:
He has stripped the green leaves that were over us all,
But they let in the sunshine as fast as they fall.

Young beauties may ravish the world with a glance
As they languish in song, as they float in the dance,—

They are grandmothers now we remember as girls,
And the comely white cap takes the place of the curls.

But the sighing and moaning and groaning are o'er,
We are pining and moping and sleepless no more,
And the hearts that were thumping like ships on the rocks
Beat as quiet and steady as meeting-house clocks.

The trump of ambition, loud sounding and shrill,
May blow its long blast, but the echoes are still,
The spring-tides are past, but no billow may reach
The spoils they have landed far up on the beach.

We see that Time robs us, we know that he cheats,
But we still find a charm in his pleasant deceits,
While he leaves the remembrance of all that was best,
Love, friendship, and hope, and the promise of rest.

Sweet shadows of twilight! how calm their repose,
While the dewdrops fall soft in the breast of the rose!
How blest to the toiler his hour of release
When the vesper is heard with its whisper of peace!

Then here 's to the wrinkled old miser, our friend;
May he send us his bills to the century's end,

And lend us the moments no sorrow alloys,
Till he squares his account with the last of "The Boys."

FOR CLASS MEETING

1875

It is a pity and a shame — alas! alas! I know it is,
To tread the trodden grapes again, but so it has been, so it is;
The purple vintage long is past, with ripened clusters bursting so
They filled the wine-vats to the brim,—'t is strange you will be thirsting so!

Too well our faithful memory tells what might be rhymed or sung about,
For all have sighed and some have wept since last year's snows were flung about;
The beacon flame that fired the sky, the modest ray that gladdened us,
A little breath has quenched their light, and deepening shades have saddened us.

No more our brother's life is ours for cheering or for grieving us,
One only sadness they bequeathed, the sorrow of their leaving us;
Farewell! Farewell! — I turn the leaf I read my chiming measure in;
Who knows but something still is there a friend may find a pleasure in?

For who can tell by what he likes what other people's fancies are?
How all men think the best of wives their own particular Nancies are?
If what I sing you brings a smile, you will not stop to catechise,
Nor read Bœotia's lumbering line with nicely scanning Attic eyes.

Perhaps the alabaster box that Mary broke so lovingly,
While Judas looked so sternly on, the Master so approvingly,
Was not so fairly wrought as those that Pilate's wife and daughters had,
Or many a dame of Judah's line that drank of Jordan's waters had.

Perhaps the balm that cost so dear, as some remarked officiously,
The precious nard that filled the room with fragrance so deliciously,
So oft recalled in storied page and sung in verse melodious,
The dancing girl had thought too cheap, — that daughter of Herodias.

Where now are all the mighty deeds that Herod boasted loudest of?
Where now the flashing jewelry the tetrarch's wife was proudest of?

Yet still to hear how Mary loved, all tribes of men
are listening,
And still the sinful woman's tears like stars in
heaven are glistening.

'T is not the gift our hands have brought, the love
it is we bring with it, —
The minstrel's lips may shape the song, his heart
in tune must sing with it;
And so we love the simple lays, and wish we might
have more of them,
Our poet brothers sing for us, — there must be half
a score of them.

It may be that of fame and name our voices once
were emulous, —
With deeper thoughts, with tenderer throbs their
softening tones are tremulous;
The dead seem listening as of old, ere friendship
was bereft of them;
The living wear a kinder smile, the remnant that
is left of them.

Though on the once unfurrowed brows the harrow-
teeth of Time may show,
Though all the strain of crippling years the halting
feet of rhyme may show,
We look and hear with melting hearts, for what
we all remember is
The morn of Spring, nor heed how chill the sky of
gray November is.

Thanks to the gracious powers above from all mankind that singled us,
And dropped the pearl of friendship in the cup they kindly mingled us,
And bound us in a wreath of flowers with hoops of steel knit under it; —
Nor time, nor space, nor chance, nor change, nor death himself shall sunder it!

"AD AMICOS"

1876

"Dumque virent genua
Et decet, obducta solvatur fonte senectus."

THE muse of boyhood's fervid hour
Grows tame as skies get chill and hazy;
Where once she sought a passion-flower,
She only hopes to find a daisy.
Well, who the changing world bewails?
Who asks to have it stay unaltered?
Shall grown-up kittens chase their tails?
Shall colts be never shod or haltered?

Are we "The Boys" that used to make
The tables ring with noisy follies?
Whose deep-lunged laughter oft would shake
The ceiling with its thunder-volleys?
Are we the youths with lips unshorn,
At beauty's feet unwrinkled suitors,
Whose memories reach tradition's morn, —
The days of prehistoric tutors?

"The Boys" we knew, — but who are these
Whose heads might serve for Plutarch's sages,
Or Fox's martyrs, if you please,
Or hermits of the dismal ages?
"The Boys" we knew — can these be those?
Their cheeks with morning's blush were painted; —
Where are the Harrys, Jims, and Joes
With whom we once were well acquainted?

If we are they, we 're not the same;
If they are we, why then they 're masking;
Do tell us, neighbor What 's-your-name,
Who are you? — What 's the use of asking?
You once were George, or Bill, or Ben;
There 's you, yourself — there 's you, that other —
I know you now — I knew you then —
You used to be your younger brother!

You both are all our own to-day, —
But ah! I hear a warning whisper;
Yon roseate hour that flits away
Repeats the Roman's sad *paulisper.*
Come back! come back! we 've need of you
To pay you for your word of warning;
We 'll bathe your wings in brighter dew
Than ever wet the lids of morning!

Behold this cup; its mystic wine
No alien's lip has ever tasted;
The blood of friendship's clinging vine,
Still flowing, flowing, yet unwasted;

Old Time forgot his running sand
And laid his hour-glass down to fill it,
And Death himself with gentle hand
Has touched the chalice, not to spill it.

Each bubble rounding at the brim
Is rainbowed with its magic story;
The shining days with age grown dim
Are dressed again in robes of glory;
In all its freshness spring returns
With song of birds and blossoms tender;
Once more the torch of passion burns,
And youth is here in all its splendor!

Hope swings her anchor like a toy,
Love laughs and shows the silver arrow
We knew so well as man and boy, —
The shaft that stings through bone and marrow;
Again our kindling pulses beat,
With tangled curls our fingers dally,
And bygone beauties smile as sweet
As fresh-blown lilies of the valley.

O blessed hour! we may forget
Its wreaths, its rhymes, its songs, its laughter,
But not the loving eyes we met,
Whose light shall gild the dim hereafter.
How every heart to each grows warm!
Is one in sunshine's ray? We share it.
Is one in sorrow's blinding storm?
A look, a word, shall help him bear it.

"The Boys" we were, "The Boys" we 'll be
As long as three, as two, are creeping;
Then here 's to him — ah! which is he? —
Who lives till all the rest are sleeping;
A life with tranquil comfort blest,
The young man's health, the rich man's plenty,
All earth can give that earth has best,
And heaven at fourscore years and twenty.

HOW NOT TO SETTLE IT

1877

I LIKE, at times, to hear the steeples' chimes
With sober thoughts impressively that mingle;
But sometimes, too, I rather like — don't you? —
To hear the music of the sleigh bells' jingle.

I like full well the deep resounding swell
Of mighty symphonies with chords inwoven;
But sometimes, too, a song of Burns — don't you?
After a solemn storm-blast of Beethoven.

Good to the heels the well-worn slipper feels
When the tired player shuffles off the buskin;
A page of Hood may do a fellow good
After a scolding from Carlyle or Ruskin.

Some works I find, — say Watts upon the Mind, —
No matter though at first they seemed amusing,
Not quite the same, but just a little tame
After some five or six times' reperusing.

So, too, at times when melancholy rhymes
Or solemn speeches sober down a dinner,
I 've seen it 's true, quite often, — have n't you? —
The best-fed guests perceptibly grow thinner.

Better some jest (in proper terms expressed)
Or story (strictly moral) even if musty,
Or song we sung when these old throats were young, —
Something to keep our souls from getting rusty.

The poorest scrap from memory's ragged lap
Comes like an heirloom from a dear dead mother —
Hush! there 's a tear that has no business here,
A half-formed sigh that ere its birth we smother.

We cry, we laugh; ah, life is half and half,
Now bright and joyous as a song of Herrick's,
Then chill and bare as funeral-minded Blair;
As fickle as a female in hysterics.

If I could make you cry I would n't try;
If you have hidden smiles I 'd like to find them,
And that although, as well I ought to know,
The lips of laughter have a skull behind them.

Yet when I think we may be on the brink
Of having Freedom's banner to dispose of,
All crimson-hued, because the Nation would
Insist on cutting its own precious nose off,

I feel indeed as if we rather need
A sermon such as preachers tie a text on.
If Freedom dies because a ballot lies,
She earns her grave; 't is time to call the sexton!

But if a fight can make the matter right,
Here are we, classmates, thirty men of mettle;
We 're strong and tough, we 've lived nigh long enough, —
What if the Nation gave it us to settle?

The tale would read like that illustrious deed
When Curtius took the leap the gap that filled in,
Thus: "Fivescore years, good friends, as it appears,
At last this people split on Hayes and Tilden.

"One half cried, 'See! the choice is S. J. T.!'
And one half swore as stoutly it was t' other;
Both drew the knife to save the Nation's life
By wholesale vivisection of each other.

"Then rose in mass that monumental Class, —
'Hold! hold!' they cried, 'give us, give us the daggers!'
'Content! content!' exclaimed with one consent
The gaunt ex-rebels and the carpet-baggers.

"Fifteen each side, the combatants divide,
So nicely balanced are their predilections;
And first of all a tear-drop each lets fall,
A tribute to their obsolete affections.

"Man facing man, the sanguine strife began,
Jack, Jim and Joe against Tom, Dick and Harry,
Each several pair its own account to square,
Till both were down or one stood solitary.

"And the great fight raged furious all the night
Till every integer was made a fraction;
Reader, wouldst know what history has to show
As net result of the above transaction?

"Whole coat-tails, four; stray fragments, several score;
A heap of spectacles; a deaf man's trumpet;
Six lawyers' briefs; seven pocket-handkerchiefs;
Twelve canes wherewith the owners used to stump it;

"Odd rubber-shoes; old gloves of different hues;
Tax-bills, — unpaid, — and several empty purses;
And, saved from harm by some protecting charm,
A printed page with Smith's immortal verses;

"Trifles that claim no very special name, —
Some useful, others chiefly ornamental;
Pins, buttons, rings, and other trivial things,
With various wrecks, capillary and dental.

"Also, one flag, — 't was nothing but a rag,
And what device it bore it little matters;
Red, white, and blue, but rent all through and through,
'Union forever' torn to shreds and tatters.

"They fought so well not one was left to tell
Which got the largest share of cuts and slashes;
When heroes meet, both sides are bound to beat;
They telescoped like cars in railroad smashes.

"So the great split that baffled human wit
And might have cost the lives of twenty millions,
As all may see that know the rule of three,
Was settled just as well by these civilians.

"As well. Just so. Not worse, not better. No,
Next morning found the Nation still divided;
Since all were slain, the inference is plain
They left the point they fought for undecided."

If not quite true, as I have told it you, —
This tale of mutual extermination,
To minds perplexed with threats of what comes next,
Perhaps may furnish food for contemplation.

To cut men's throats to help them count their votes
Is asinine — nay, worse — ascidian folly;
Blindness like that would scare the mole and bat,
And make the liveliest monkey melancholy.

I say once more, as I have said before,
If voting for our Tildens and our Hayeses
Means only fight, then, Liberty, good night!
Pack up your ballot-box and go to blazes!

Unfurl your blood-red flags, you murderous hags,
You *pétroleuses* of Paris, fierce and foamy;
We 'll sell our stock in Plymouth's blasted rock,
Pull up our stakes and migrate to Dahomey!

THE LAST SURVIVOR

1878

Yes! the vacant chairs tell sadly we are going, going fast,
And the thought comes strangely o'er me, who will live to be the last?
When the twentieth century's sunbeams climb the far-off eastern hill,
With his ninety winters burdened, will he greet the morning still?

Will he stand with Harvard's nurslings when they hear their mother's call
And the old and young are gathered in the many alcoved hall?
Will he answer to the summons when they range themselves in line
And the young mustachioed marshal calls out "Class of '29"?

Methinks I see the column as its lengthened ranks appear
In the sunshine of the morrow of the nineteen hundredth year;

Through the yard 't is creeping, winding, by the
walls of dusky red, —
What shape is that which totters at the long pro-
cession's head?

Who knows this ancient graduate of fourscore
years and ten, —
What place he held, what name he bore among the
sons of men?
So speeds the curious question; its answer travels
slow;
" 'T is the last of sixty classmates of seventy years
ago."

His figure shows but dimly, his face I scarce can
see, —
There 's something that reminds me, — it looks
like — is it he?
He? Who? No voice may whisper what wrinkled
brow shall claim
The wreath of stars that circles our last survivor's
name.

Will he be some veteran minstrel, left to pipe in
feeble rhyme
All the stories and the glories of our gay and
golden time?
Or some quiet, voiceless brother in whose lonely,
loving breast
Fond memory broods in silence, like a dove upon
her nest?

Will it be some old *Emeritus*, who taught so long ago
The boys that heard him lecture have heads as white as snow?
Or a pious, painful preacher, holding forth from year to year
Till his colleague got a colleague whom the young folks flocked to hear?

Will it be a rich old merchant in a square-tied white cravat,
Or select-man of a village in a pre-historic hat?
Will his dwelling be a mansion in a marble-fronted row,
Or a homestead by a hillside where the huckleberries grow?

I can see our one survivor, sitting lonely by himself, —
All his college text-books round him, ranged in order on their shelf;
There are classic "interliners" filled with learning's choicest pith,
Each *cum notis variorum*, *quas recensuit doctus* Smith;

Physics, metaphysics, logic, mathematics — all the lot
Every wisdom-crammed octavo he has mastered and forgot,

With the ghosts of dead professors standing guard
beside them all;
And the room is full of shadows which their let-
tered backs recall.

How the past spreads out in vision with its far
receding train,
Like a long embroidered arras in the chambers of
the brain,
From opening manhood's morning when first we
learned to grieve
To the fond regretful moments of our sorrow-sad-
dened eve!

What early shadows darkened our idle summer's
joy
When death snatched roughly from us that lovely
bright-eyed boy!
The years move swiftly onwards; the deadly shafts
fall fast, —
Till all have dropped around him — lo, there he
stands, — the last!

Their faces flit before him, some rosy-hued and
fair,
Some strong in iron manhood, some worn with toil
and care;
Their smiles no more shall greet him on cheeks
with pleasure flushed!
The friendly hands are folded, the pleasant voices
hushed!

. . . . . .

My picture sets me dreaming; alas! and can it be
Those two familiar faces we never more may see?
In every entering footfall I think them drawing
near,
With every door that opens I say, "At last they 're
here!"

The willow bends unbroken when angry tempests
blow,
The stately oak is levelled and all its strength laid
low;
So fell that tower of manhood, undaunted, patient,
strong,
White with the gathering snowflakes, who faced
the storm so long.

And he, — what subtle phrases their varying light
must blend
To paint as each remembers our many-featured
friend!
His wit a flash auroral that laughed in every look,
His talk a sunbeam broken on the ripples of a
brook,

Or, fed from thousand sources, a fountain's glitter-
ing jet,
Or careless handfuls scattered of diamond sparks
unset;
Ah, sketch him, paint him, mould him in every
shape you will,
He was *himself* — the only — the one unpictured
still!

Farewell! our skies are darkened and yet the stars
will shine,
We 'll close our ranks together and still fall into
line
Till one is left, one only, to mourn for all the rest;
And Heaven bequeath their memories to him who
loves us best!

THE ARCHBISHOP AND GIL BLAS

A MODERNIZED VERSION

1879

I DON'T think I feel much older; I 'm aware I 'm
rather gray,
But so are many young folks; I meet 'em every
day.
I confess I 'm more particular in what I eat and
drink,
But one's taste improves with culture; that is all
it means, I think.

Can you read as once you used to? Well, the
printing is so bad,
No young folks' eyes can read it like the books
that once we had.
Are you quite as quick of hearing? Please to say
that once again.
Don't I use plain words, your Reverence? Yes,
I often use a cane,

But it 's not because I need it, — no, I always
liked a stick;
And as one might lean upon it, 't is as well it
should be thick.
Oh, I 'm smart, I 'm spry, I 'm lively, — I can
walk, yes, that I can,
On the days I feel like walking, just as well as
you, young man!

Don't you get a little sleepy after dinner every day?
Well, I doze a little, sometimes, but that always
was my way.
Don't you cry a little easier than some twenty years ago?
Well, my heart is very tender, but I think 't was
always so.

Don't you find it sometimes happens that you can't recall a name?
Yes, I know such lots of people, — but my memory 's not to blame.
What! You think my memory 's failing! Why, it 's just as bright and clear, —
I remember my great-grandma! She 's been dead
these sixty year!

Is your voice a little trembly? Well, it may be,
now and then,
But I write as well as ever with a good old-fashioned pen;

It 's the Gillotts make the trouble, — not at all my
finger-ends, —
That is why my hand looks shaky when I sign for
dividends.

Don't you stoop a little, walking? It 's a way
I 've always had,
I have always been round-shouldered, ever since I
was a lad.
Don't you hate to tie your shoe-strings? Yes, I
own it — that is true.
Don't you tell old stories over? I am not aware
I do.

Don't you stay at home of evenings? Don't you
love a cushioned seat
In a corner, by the fireside, with your slippers on
your feet?
Don't you wear warm fleecy flannels? Don't you
muffle up your throat?
Don't you like to have one help you when you 're
putting on your coat?

Don't you like old books you 've dogs-eared, you
can't remember when?
Don't you call it late at nine o'clock and go to
bed at ten?
How many cronies can you count of all you used
to know
Who called you by your Christian name some fifty
years ago?

How look the prizes to you that used to fire your brain?
You've reared your mound — how high is it above the level plain?
You've drained the brimming golden cup that made your fancy reel,
You've slept the giddy potion off, — now tell us how you feel!

You've watched the harvest ripening till every stem was cropped,
You've seen the rose of beauty fade till every petal dropped,
You've told your thought, you've done your task, you've tracked your dial round,
— I backing down! Thank Heaven, not yet! I 'm hale and brisk and sound,

And good for many a tussle, as you shall live to see;
My shoes are not quite ready yet, — don't think you 're rid of me!
Old Parr was in his lusty prime when he was older far,
And where will you be if I live to beat old Thomas Parr?

Ah well, — I know, — at every age life has a certain charm, —
You're going? Come, permit me, please, I beg you'll take my arm.

I take your arm! Why take your arm? I 'd thank you to be told
I 'm old enough to walk alone, but not so *very* old!

THE SHADOWS

1880

"How many have gone? " was the question of old
Ere Time our bright ring of its jewels bereft;
Alas! for too often the death-bell has tolled,
And the question we ask is, "How many are left ?"

Bright sparkled the wine; there were *fifty* that quaffed;
For a decade had slipped and had taken but three.
How they frolicked and sung, how they shouted and laughed,
Like a school full of boys from their benches set free!

There were speeches and toasts, there were stories and rhymes,
The hall shook its sides with their merriment's noise;
As they talked and lived over the college-day times, —
No wonder they kept their old name of "The Boys"!

The seasons moved on in their rhythmical flow
With mornings like maidens that pouted or smiled,
With the bud and the leaf and the fruit and the snow,
And the year-books of Time in his alcoves were piled.

There were *forty* that gathered where fifty had met;
Some locks had got silvered, some lives had grown sere,
But the laugh of the laughers was lusty as yet,
And the song of the singers rose ringing and clear.

Still flitted the years; there were *thirty* that came;
"The Boys" they were still, and they answered their call;
There were foreheads of care, but the smiles were the same,
And the chorus rang loud through the garlanded hall.

The hour-hand moved on, and they gathered again;
There were *twenty* that joined in the hymn that was sung;
But ah! for our song-bird we listened in vain, —
The crystalline tones like a seraph's that rung!

How narrow the circle that holds us to-night!
How many the loved ones that greet us no more,

As we meet like the stragglers that come from the fight,
Like the mariners flung from a wreck on the shore!

We look through the twilight for those we have lost;
The stream rolls between us, and yet they seem near;
Already outnumbered by those who have crossed,
Our band is transplanted, its home is not here!

They smile on us still — is it only a dream? —
While fondly or proudly their names we recall;
They beckon — they come — they are crossing the stream —
Lo! the Shadows! the Shadows! room — room for them all!

BENJAMIN PEIRCE

ASTRONOMER, MATHEMATICIAN. 1809-1890

1881

For him the Architect of all
Unroofed our planet's starlit hall;
Through voids unknown to worlds unseen
His clearer vision rose serene.

With us on earth he walked by day,
His midnight path how far away!

We knew him not so well who knew
The patient eyes his soul looked through;

For who his untrod realm could share
Of us that breathe this mortal air,
Or camp in that celestial tent
Whose fringes gild our firmament?

How vast the workroom where he brought
The viewless implements of thought!
The wit how subtle, how profound,
That Nature's tangled webs unwound;

That through the clouded matrix saw
The crystal planes of shaping law,
Through these the sovereign skill that planned, —
The Father's care, the Master's hand!

To him the wandering stars revealed
The secrets in their cradle sealed:
The far-off, frozen sphere that swings
Through ether, zoned with lucid rings;

The orb that rolls in dim eclipse
Wide wheeling round its long ellipse, —
His name Urania writes with these
And stamps it on her Pleiades.

We knew him not? Ah, well we knew
The manly soul, so brave, so true,
The cheerful heart that conquered age,
The childlike silver-bearded sage.

No more his tireless thought explores
The azure sea with golden shores;
Rest, wearied frame! the stars shall keep
A loving watch where thou shalt sleep.

Farewell! the spirit needs must rise,
So long a tenant of the skies, —
Rise to that home all worlds above
Whose sun is God, whose light is love.

IN THE TWILIGHT

1882

Not bed-time yet! The night-winds blow,
The stars are out, — full well we know
The nurse is on the stair,
With hand of ice and cheek of snow,
And frozen lips that whisper low,
"Come, children, it is time to go
My peaceful couch to share."

No years a wakeful heart can tire;
Not bed-time yet! Come, stir the fire
And warm your dear old hands;
Kind Mother Earth we love so well
Has pleasant stories yet to tell
Before we hear the curfew bell;
Still glow the burning brands.

Not bed-time yet! We long to know
What wonders time has yet to show,
What unborn years shall bring;

What ship the Arctic pole shall reach,
What lessons Science waits to teach,
What sermons there are left to preach.
What poems yet to sing.

What next? we ask; and is it true
The sunshine falls on nothing new,
As Israel's king declared?
Was ocean ploughed with harnessed fire?
Were nations coupled with a wire?
Did Tarshish telegraph to Tyre?
How Hiram would have stared!

And what if Sheba's curious queen,
Who came to see, — and to be seen, —
Or something new to seek,
And swooned, as ladies sometimes do,
At sights that thrilled her through and through,
Had heard, as she was "coming to,"
A locomotive's shriek,

And seen a rushing railway train
As she looked out along the plain
From David's lofty tower, —
A mile of smoke that blots the sky
And blinds the eagles as they fly
Behind the cars that thunder by
A score of leagues an hour!

See to my *fiat lux* respond
This little slumbering fire-tipped wand, —
One touch, — it bursts in flame!

Steal me a portrait from the sun, —
One look, — and lo! the picture done!
Are these old tricks, King Solomon,
We lying moderns claim?

Could you have spectroscoped a star?
If both those mothers at your bar,
The cruel and the mild,
The young and tender, old and tough,
Had said, "Divide, — you 're right, though rough," —
Did old Judea know enough
To etherize the child?

These births of time our eyes have seen,
With but a few brief years between;
What wonder if the text,
For other ages doubtless true,
For coming years will never do, —
Whereof we all should like a few,
If but to see what next.

If such things have been, such may be;
Who would not like to live and see —
If Heaven may so ordain —
What waifs undreamed of, yet in store,
The waves that roll forevermore
On life's long beach may cast ashore
From out the mist-clad main?

Will Earth to pagan dreams return
To find from misery's painted urn
That all save hope has flown, —

Of Book and Church and Priest bereft,
The Rock of Ages vainly cleft,
Life's compass gone, its anchor left,
Left, — lost, — in depths unknown?

Shall Faith the trodden path pursue
The *crux ansata* wearers knew
Who sleep with folded hands,
Where, like a naked, lidless eye,
The staring Nile rolls wandering by
Those mountain slopes that climb the sky
Above the drifting sands?

Or shall a nobler Faith return,
Its fanes a purer gospel learn,
With holier anthems ring,
And teach us that our transient creeds
Were but the perishable seeds
Of harvests sown for larger needs,
That ripening years shall bring?

Well, let the present do its best,
We trust our Maker for the rest,
As on our way we plod;
Our souls, full dressed in fleshly suits,
Love air and sunshine, flowers and fruits,
The daisies better than their roots
Beneath the grassy sod.

Not bed-time yet! The full-blown flower
Of all the year — this evening hour —
With friendship's flame is bright;

Life still is sweet, the heavens are fair,
Though fields are brown and woods are bare,
And many a joy is left to share
  Before we say Good-night!

And when, our cheerful evening past,
The nurse, long waiting, comes at last,
  Ere on her lap we lie
In wearied nature's sweet repose,
At peace with all her waking foes,
Our lips shall murmur, ere they close,
  Good-night! and not Good-by!

A LOVING-CUP SONG

1883

Come, heap the fagots! Ere we go
Again the cheerful hearth shall glow;
  We 'll have another blaze, my boys!
When clouds are black and snows are white,
Then Christmas logs lend ruddy light
  They stole from summer days, my boys,
    They stole from summer days.

And let the Loving-Cup go round,
The Cup with blessed memories crowned,
  That flows whene'er we meet, my boys;
No draught will hold a drop of sin
If love is only well stirred in
  To keep it sound and sweet, my boys,
    To keep it sound and sweet.

Give me, to pin upon my breast,
The blossoms twain I love the best,
A rosebud and a pink, my boys;
Their leaves shall nestle next my heart,
Their perfumed breath shall own its part
In every health we drink, my boys,
In every health we drink.

The breathing blossoms stir my blood,
Methinks I see the lilacs bud
And hear the bluebirds sing, my boys;
Why not? Yon lusty oak has seen
Full tenscore years, yet leaflets green
Peep out with every spring, my boys,
Peep out with every spring.

Old Time his rusty scythe may whet,
The unmowed grass is glowing yet
Beneath the sheltering snow, my boys;
And if the crazy dotard ask,
Is love worn out? Is life a task?
We 'll bravely answer No! my boys,
We 'll bravely answer No!

For life's bright taper is the same
Love tipped of old with rosy flame
That heaven's own altar lent, my boys,
To glow in every cup we fill
Till lips are mute and hearts are still,
Till life and love are spent, my boys,
Till life and love are spent.

THE GIRDLE OF FRIENDSHIP

1884

SHE gathered at her slender waist
The beauteous robe she wore;
Its folds a golden belt embraced,
One rose-hued gem it bore.

The girdle shrank; its lessening round
Still kept the shining gem,
But now her flowing locks it bound,
A lustrous diadem.

And narrower still the circlet grew;
Behold! a glittering band,
Its roseate diamond set anew,
Her neck's white column spanned.

Suns rise and set; the straining clasp
The shortened links resist,
Yet flashes in a bracelet's grasp
The diamond, on her wrist.

At length, the round of changes past
The thieving years could bring,
The jewel, glittering to the last,
Still sparkles in a ring.

So, link by link, our friendships part,
So loosen, break, and fall,
A narrowing zone; the loving heart
Lives changeless through them all.

THE LYRE OF ANACREON

1885

THE minstrel of the classic lay
  Of love and wine who sings
Still found the fingers run astray
  That touched the rebel strings.

Of Cadmus he would fain have sung,
  Of Atreus and his line;
But all the jocund echoes rung
  With songs of love and wine.

Ah, brothers! I would fain have caught
  Some fresher fancy's gleam;
My truant accents find, unsought,
  The old familiar theme.

Love, Love! but not the sportive child
  With shaft and twanging bow,
Whose random arrows drove us wild
  Some threescore years ago;

Not Eros, with his joyous laugh,
  The urchin blind and bare,
But Love, with spectacles and staff,
  And scanty, silvered hair.

Our heads with frosted locks are white,
  Our roofs are thatched with snow,
But red, in chilling winter's spite,
  Our hearts and hearthstones glow.

Our old acquaintance, Time, drops in,
And while the running sands
Their golden thread unheeded spin,
He warms his frozen hands.

Stay, wingèd hours, too swift, too sweet,
And waft this message o'er
To all we miss, from all we meet
On life's fast-crumbling shore:

Say that, to old affection true,
We hug the narrowing chain
That binds our hearts, — alas, how few
The links that yet remain!

The fatal touch awaits them all
That turns the rocks to dust;
From year to year they break and fall, —
They break, but never rust.

Say if one note of happier strain
This worn-out harp afford, —
One throb that trembles, not in vain, —
Their memory lent its chord.

Say that when Fancy closed her wings
And Passion quenched his fire,
Love, Love, still echoed from the strings
As from Anacreon's lyre!

THE OLD TUNE

THIRTY-SIXTH VARIATION

1886

THIS shred of song you bid me bring
  Is snatched from fancy's embers;
Ah, when the lips forget to sing,
  The faithful heart remembers!

Too swift the wings of envious Time
  To wait for dallying phrases,
Or woven strands of labored rhyme
  To thread their cunning mazes.

A word, a sigh, and lo, how plain
  Its magic breath discloses
Our life's long vista through a lane
  Of threescore summers' roses!

One language years alone can teach:
  Its roots are young affections
That feel their way to simplest speech
  Through silent recollections.

That tongue is ours. How few the words
  We need to know a brother!
As simple are the notes of birds,
  Yet well they know each other.

This freezing month of ice and snow
  That brings our lives together

Lends to our year a living glow
That warms its wintry weather.

So let us meet as eve draws nigh,
And life matures and mellows,
Till Nature whispers with a sigh,
"Good-night, my dear old fellows!"

THE BROKEN CIRCLE

1887

I STOOD on Sarum's treeless plain,
The waste that careless Nature owns;
Lone tenants of her bleak domain,
Loomed huge and gray the Druid stones.

Upheaved in many a billowy mound
The sea-like, naked turf arose,
Where wandering flocks went nibbling round
The mingled graves of friends and foes.

The Briton, Roman, Saxon, Dane,
This windy desert roamed in turn;
Unmoved these mighty blocks remain
Whose story none that lives may learn.

Erect, half buried, slant or prone,
These awful listeners, blind and dumb,
Hear the strange tongues of tribes unknown,
As wave on wave they go and come.

"Who are you, giants, whence and why?"
I stand and ask in blank amaze;
My soul accepts their mute reply:
"A mystery, as are you that gaze.

"A silent Orpheus wrought the charm
From riven rocks their spoils to bring;
A nameless Titan lent his arm
To range us in our magic ring.

"But Time with still and stealthy stride,
That climbs and treads and levels all,
That bids the loosening keystone slide,
And topples down the crumbling wall, —

"Time, that unbuilds the quarried past,
Leans on these wrecks that press the sod;
They slant, they stoop, they fall at last,
And strew the turf their priests have trod.

"No more our altar's wreath of smoke
Floats up with morning's fragrant dew;
The fires are dead, the ring is broke,
Where stood the many stand the few."

My thoughts had wandered far away,
Borne off on Memory's outspread wing,
To where in deepening twilight lay
The wrecks of friendship's broken ring.

Ah me! of all our goodly train
How few will find our banquet hall!

Yet why with coward lips complain
That this must lean, and that must fall?

Cold is the Druid's altar-stone,
Its vanished flame no more returns;
But ours no chilling damp has known, —
Unchanged, unchanging, still it burns.

So let our broken circle stand
A wreck, a remnant, yet the same,
While one last, loving, faithful hand
Still lives to feed its altar-flame!

THE ANGEL-THIEF

1888

Time is a thief who leaves his tools behind him;
He comes by night, he vanishes at dawn;
We track his footsteps, but we never find him:
Strong locks are broken, massive bolts are drawn,

And all around are left the bars and borers,
The splitting wedges and the prying keys,
Such aids as serve the soft-shod vault-explorers
To crack, wrench open, rifle as they please.

Ah, these are tools which Heaven in mercy lends us!
When gathering rust has clenched our shackles fast,
Time is the angel-thief that Nature sends us
To break the cramping fetters of our past.

Mourn as we may for treasures he has taken,
Poor as we feel of hoarded wealth bereft,
More precious are those implements forsaken,
Found in the wreck his ruthless hands have left.

Some lever that a casket's hinge has broken
Pries off a bolt, and lo! our souls are free;
Each year some Open Sesame is spoken,
And every decade drops its master-key.

So as from year to year we count our treasure,
Our loss seems less, and larger look our gains;
Time's wrongs repaid in more than even measure, —
We lose our jewels, but we break our chains.

AFTER THE CURFEW

1889

The Play is over. While the light
Yet lingers in the darkening hall,
I come to say a last Good-night
Before the final *Exeunt all.*

We gathered once, a joyous throng:
The jovial toasts went gayly round;
With jest, and laugh, and shout, and song,
We made the floors and walls resound.

We come with feeble steps and slow,
A little band of four or five,

Left from the wrecks of long ago,
Still pleased to find ourselves alive.

Alive! How living, too, are they
Whose memories it is ours to share!
Spread the long table's full array, —
There sits a ghost in every chair!

One breathing form no more, alas!
Amid our slender group we see;
With him we still remained "The Class," —
Without his presence what are we?

The hand we ever loved to clasp, —
That tireless hand which knew no rest, —
Loosed from affection's clinging grasp,
Lies nerveless on the peaceful breast.

The beaming eye, the cheering voice,
That lent to life a generous glow,
Whose every meaning said "Rejoice,"
We see, we hear, no more below.

The air seems darkened by his loss,
Earth's shadowed features look less fair,
And heavier weighs the daily cross
His willing shoulders helped us bear.

Why mourn that we, the favored few
Whom grasping Time so long has spared
Life's sweet illusions to pursue,
The common lot of age have shared?

In every pulse of Friendship's heart
  There breeds unfelt a throb of pain, —
One hour must rend its links apart,
  Though years on years have forged the chain.

So ends "The Boys," — a lifelong play.
  We too must hear the Prompter's call
To fairer scenes and brighter day:
  Farewell! I let the curtain fall.

POEMS FROM THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

1857–1858

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
Sails the unshadowed main, —
The venturous bark that flings
On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
And coral reefs lie bare,
Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
And every chambered cell,
Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,
Before thee lies revealed, —
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,

Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old
no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea,
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice
that sings: —

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting
sea!

SUN AND SHADOW.

As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue:
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun, —
Of breakers that whiten and roar;
How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
They see him who gaze from the shore!
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lee,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade;
Yet true to our course, though the shadows grow dark,
We 'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore!

MUSA

O MY lost beauty! — hast thou folded quite
Thy wings of morning light
Beyond those iron gates
Where Life crowds hurrying to the haggard Fates,
And Age upon his mound of ashes waits
To chill our fiery dreams,
Hot from the heart of youth plunged in his icy streams?

Leave me not fading in these weeds of care,
Whose flowers are silvered hair!
Have I not loved thee long,
Though my young lips have often done thee wrong,
And vexed thy heaven-tuned ear with careless song?
Ah, wilt thou yet return,
Bearing thy rose-hued torch, and bid thine altar burn?

Come to me! — I will flood thy silent shrine
With my soul's sacred wine,
And heap thy marble floors
As the wild spice-trees waste their fragrant stores,
In leafy islands walled with madrepores
And lapped in Orient seas,
When all their feathery palms toss, plume-like, in the breeze.

Come to me! — thou shalt feed on honeyed words,
Sweeter than song of birds; —
No wailing bulbul's throat,
No melting dulcimer's melodious note
When o'er the midnight wave its murmurs float,
Thy ravished sense might soothe
With flow so liquid-soft, with strain so velvet-smooth.

Thou shalt be decked with jewels, like a queen,
Sought in those bowers of green
Where loop the clustered vines
And the close-clinging dulcamara twines, —

Pure pearls of Maydew where the moonlight shines,
And Summer's fruited gems,
And coral pendants shorn from Autumn's berried stems.

Sit by me drifting on the sleepy waves, —
Or stretched by grass-grown graves,
Whose gray, high-shouldered stones,
Carved with old names Life's time-worn roll disowns,
Lean, lichen-spotted, o'er the crumbled bones
Still slumbering where they lay
While the sad Pilgrim watched to scare the wolf away.

Spread o'er my couch thy visionary wing!
Still let me dream and sing, —
Dream of that winding shore
Where scarlet cardinals bloom — for me no more, —
The stream with heaven beneath its liquid floor,
And clustering nenuphars
Sprinkling its mirrored blue like golden-chaliced stars!

Come while their balms the linden-blossoms shed! —
Come while the rose is red, —
While blue-eyed Summer smiles
On the green ripples round yon sunken piles

Washed by the moon-wave warm from Indian isles,
And on the sultry air
The chestnuts spread their palms like holy men in prayer!

Oh for thy burning lips to fire my brain
With thrills of wild, sweet pain! —
On life's autumnal blast,
Like shrivelled leaves, youth's passion-flowers are cast,—
Once loving thee, we love thee to the last! —
Behold thy new-decked shrine,
And hear once more the voice that breathed "Forever thine!"

A PARTING HEALTH

TO J. L. MOTLEY

Yes, we knew we must lose him, — though friendship may claim
To blend her green leaves with the laurels of fame;
Though fondly, at parting, we call him our own,
'T is the whisper of love when the bugle has blown.

As the rider that rests with the spur on his heel,
As the guardsman that sleeps in his corselet of steel,
As the archer that stands with his shaft on the string,
He stoops from his toil to the garland we bring.

What pictures yet slumber unborn in his loom,
Till their warriors shall breathe and their beauties shall bloom,
While the tapestry lengthens the life-glowing dyes
That caught from our sunsets the stain of their skies!

In the alcoves of death, in the charnels of time,
Where flit the gaunt spectres of passion and crime,
There are triumphs untold, there are martyrs unsung,
There are heroes yet silent to speak with his tongue!

Let us hear the proud story which time has bequeathed!
From lips that are warm with the freedom they breathed!
Let him summon its tyrants, and tell us their doom,
Though he sweep the black past like Van Tromp with his broom!

. . . . . .

The dream flashes by, for the west-winds awake
On pampas, on prairie, o'er mountain and lake,
To bathe the swift bark, like a sea-girdled shrine,
With incense they stole from the rose and the pine.

So fill a bright cup with the sunlight that gushed
When the dead summer's jewels were trampled and crushed:
THE TRUE KNIGHT OF LEARNING, — the world holds him dear, —
Love bless him, Joy crown him, God speed his career!

1857.

WHAT WE ALL THINK

THAT age was older once than now,
  In spite of locks untimely shed,
Or silvered on the youthful brow;
  That babes make love and children wed.

That sunshine had a heavenly glow,
  Which faded with those "good old days"
When winters came with deeper snow,
  And autumns with a softer haze.

That — mother, sister, wife, or child —
  The "best of women" each has known.
Were school-boys ever half so wild?
  How young the grandpapas have grown!

That *but for this* our souls were free,
  And *but for that* our lives were blest;
That in some season yet to be
  Our cares will leave us time to rest.

Whene'er we groan with ache or pain, —
  Some common ailment of the race, —
Though doctors think the matter plain, —
  That ours is "a peculiar case."

That when like babes with fingers burned
  We count one bitter maxim more,
Our lesson all the world has learned,
  And men are wiser than before.

That when we sob o'er fancied woes,
The angels hovering overhead
Count every pitying drop that flows,
And love us for the tears we shed.

That when we stand with tearless eye
And turn the beggar from our door,
They still approve us when we sigh,
"Ah, had I but *one thousand more!*"

Though temples crowd the crumbled brink
O'erhanging truth's eternal flow,
Their tablets bold with *what we think*,
Their echoes dumb to *what we know;*

That one unquestioned text we read,
All doubt beyond, all fear above,
Nor crackling pile nor cursing creed
Can burn or blot it: GOD IS LOVE!

SPRING HAS COME

INTRA MUROS

THE sunbeams, lost for half a year,
Slant through my pane their morning rays;
For dry northwesters cold and clear,
The east blows in its thin blue haze.

And first the snowdrop's bells are seen,
Then close against the sheltering wall

The tulip's horn of dusky green,
The peony's dark unfolding ball.

The golden-chaliced crocus burns;
The long narcissus-blades appear;
The cone-beaked hyacinth returns
To light her blue-flamed chandelier.

The willow's whistling lashes, wrung
By the wild winds of gusty March,
With sallow leaflets lightly strung,
Are swaying by the tufted larch.

The elms have robed their slender spray
With full-blown flower and embryo leaf;
Wide o'er the clasping arch of day
Soars like a cloud their hoary chief.

See the proud tulip's flaunting cup,
That flames in glory for an hour, —
Behold it withering, — then look up, —
How meek the forest monarch's flower!

When wake the violets, Winter dies;
When sprout the elm-buds, Spring is near;
When lilacs blossom, Summer cries,
"Bud, little roses! Spring is here!"

The windows blush with fresh bouquets,
Cut with the May-dew on their lips;
The radish all its bloom displays,
Pink as Aurora's finger-tips.

Nor less the flood of light that showers
On beauty's changed corolla-shades, —
The walks are gay as bridal bowers
With rows of many-petalled maids.

The scarlet shell-fish click and clash
In the blue barrow where they slide;
The horseman, proud of streak and splash,
Creeps homeward from his morning ride.

Here comes the dealer's awkward string,
With neck in rope and tail in knot, —
Rough colts, with careless country-swing,
In lazy walk or slouching trot.

Wild filly from the mountain-side,
Doomed to the close and chafing thills,
Lend me thy long, untiring stride
To seek with thee thy western hills!

I hear the whispering voice of Spring,
The thrush's trill, the robin's cry,
Like some poor bird with prisoned wing
That sits and sings, but longs to fly.

Oh for one spot of living green, —
One little spot where leaves can grow, —
To love unblamed, to walk unseen,
To dream above, to sleep below!

PROLOGUE

A PROLOGUE? Well, of course the ladies know, —
I have my doubts. No matter, — here we go!
What is a Prologue? Let our Tutor teach:
Pro means beforehand; *logos* stands for speech.
'T is like the harper's prelude on the strings,
The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings;
Prologues in metre are to other *pros*
As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.
"The world 's a stage," — as Shakespeare said, one day;
The stage a world — was what he meant to say.
The outside world 's a blunder, that is clear;
The real world that Nature meant is here.
Here every foundling finds its lost mamma;
Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa;
Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,
The cheats are taken in the traps they laid;
One after one the troubles all are past
Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,
When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,
Join hands, *so* happy at the curtain's fall.
Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
And black-browed ruffians always come to grief.
When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,
And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
Cries, "Help, kyind Heaven!" and drops upon her knees
On the green — baize, — beneath the (canvas) trees, —

See to her side avenging Valor fly: —
"Ha! Villain! Draw! Now, Terraitorr, yield or die!"
When the poor hero flounders in despair,
Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,
Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
Sobs on his neck, "*My boy!* My boy!! MY BOY!!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night,
Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
Ladies, attend! While woful cares and doubt
Wrong the soft passion in the world without,
Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
One thing is certain: Love will triumph here!
Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule, —
The world's great masters, when you 're out of school, —
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will, — but woman has her way!
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,
Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire, —
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves
Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel, — woman's wilful heart.
All foes you master, but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you 're hit.
So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story, made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade.
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.
Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,
Rudolph the headsman rose above the crowd.
His falchion lighted with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armor flashes in the stream.
He sheathed his blade; he turned as if to go;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
"Why strikest not? Perform thy murderous act,"
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
"Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied;
"Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."
He held his snuff-box, — "Now then, if you please!"
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,
Off his head tumbled, — bowled along the floor, —
Bounced down the steps; — the prisoner said no more!
Woman! thy falchion is a glittering eye;
If death lurk in it, oh how sweet to die!
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head;
We die with love, and never dream we 're dead!

LATTER-DAY WARNINGS

When legislators keep the law,
  When banks dispense with bolts and locks,
When berries — whortle, rasp, and straw —
  Grow bigger *downwards* through the box, —

When he that selleth house or land
  Shows leak in roof or flaw in right, —
When haberdashers choose the stand
  Whose window hath the broadest light, —

When preachers tell us all they think,
  And party leaders all they mean, —
When what we pay for, that we drink,
  From real grape and coffee-bean, —

When lawyers take what they would give,
  And doctors give what they would take, —
When city fathers eat to live,
  Save when they fast for conscience' sake, —

When one that hath a horse on sale
  Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
  That holds the iron on the hoof, —

When in the usual place for rips
  Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
  Where first umbrellas need repair, —

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret-bottles harbor not
Such dimples as would hold your fist, —

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before, —
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls through the Hoosac Tunnel's bore; —

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe!

ALBUM VERSES

When Eve had led her lord away,
And Cain had killed his brother,
The stars and flowers, the poets say,
Agreed with one another

To cheat the cunning tempter's art,
And teach the race its duty,
By keeping on its wicked heart
Their eyes of light and beauty.

A million sleepless lids, they say,
Will be at least a warning;
And so the flowers would watch by day,
The stars from eve to morning.

On hill and prairie, field and lawn,
Their dewy eyes upturning,
The flowers still watch from reddening dawn
Till western skies are burning.

Alas! each hour of daylight tells
A tale of shame so crushing,
That some turn white as sea-bleached shells,
And some are always blushing.

But when the patient stars look down
On all their light discovers,
The traitor's smile, the murderer's frown,
The lips of lying lovers,

They try to shut their saddening eyes,
And in the vain endeavor
We see them twinkling in the skies,
And so they wink forever.

A GOOD TIME GOING!

Brave singer of the coming time,
Sweet minstrel of the joyous present,
Crowned with the noblest wreath of rhyme,
The holly-leaf of Ayrshire's peasant,
Good by! Good by! — Our hearts and hands,
Our lips in honest Saxon phrases,
Cry, God be with him, till he stands
His feet among the English daisies!

'T is here we part ; — for other eyes
The busy deck, the fluttering streamer,
The dripping arms that plunge and rise,
The waves in foam, the ship in tremor,
The kerchiefs waving from the pier,
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,
The deep blue desert, lone and drear,
With heaven above and home before him!

His home! — the Western giant smiles,
And twirls the spotty globe to find it; —
This little speck the British Isles?
'T is but a freckle, — never mind it!
He laughs, and all his prairies roll,
Each gurgling cataract roars and chuckles,
And ridges stretched from pole to pole
Heave till they crack their iron knuckles!

But Memory blushes at the sneer,
And Honor turns with frown defiant,
And Freedom, leaning on her spear,
Laughs louder than the laughing giant:
"An islet is a world," she said,
"When glory with its dust has blended,
And Britain keeps her noble dead
Till earth and seas and skies are rended!"

Beneath each swinging forest-bough
Some arm as stout in death reposes, —
From wave-washed foot to heaven-kissed brow
Her valor's life-blood runs in roses;

Nay, let our brothers of the West
  Write smiling in their florid pages,
One half her soil has walked the rest
  In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages!

Hugged in the clinging billow's clasp,
  From sea-weed fringe to mountain heather,
The British oak with rooted grasp
  Her slender handful holds together; —
With cliffs of white and bowers of green,
  And Ocean narrowing to caress her,
And hills and threaded streams between, —
  Our little mother isle, God bless her!

In earth's broad temple where we stand,
  Fanned by the eastern gales that brought us,
We hold the missal in our hand,
  Bright with the lines our Mother taught us.
Where'er its blazoned page betrays
  The glistening links of gilded fetters,
Behold, the half-turned leaf displays
  Her rubric stained in crimson letters!

Enough! To speed a parting friend
  'T is vain alike to speak and listen; —
Yet stay, — these feeble accents blend
  With rays of light from eyes that glisten.
Good by! once more, — and kindly tell
  In words of peace the young world's story, —
And say, besides, we love too well
  Our mothers' soil, our fathers' glory!

THE LAST BLOSSOM

Though young no more, we still would dream
Of beauty's dear deluding wiles;
The leagues of life to graybeards seem
Shorter than boyhood's lingering miles.

Who knows a woman's wild caprice?
It played with Goethe's silvered hair,
And many a Holy Father's "niece"
Has softly smoothed the papal chair.

When sixty bids us sigh in vain
To melt the heart of sweet sixteen,
We think upon those ladies twain
Who loved so well the tough old Dean.

We see the Patriarch's wintry face,
The maid of Egypt's dusky glow,
And dream that Youth and Age embrace,
As April violets fill with snow.

Tranced in her lord's Olympian smile
His lotus-loving Memphian lies, —
The musky daughter of the Nile,
With plaited hair and almond eyes.

Might we but share one wild caress
Ere life's autumnal blossoms fall,
And Earth's brown, clinging lips impress
The long cold kiss that waits us all!

My bosom heaves, remembering yet
The morning of that blissful day,
When Rose, the flower of spring, I met,
And gave my raptured soul away.

Flung from her eyes of purest blue,
A lasso, with its leaping chain,
Light as a loop of larkspurs, flew
O'er sense and spirit, heart and brain.

Thou com'st to cheer my waning age,
Sweet vision, waited for so long!
Dove that would seek the poet's cage
Lured by the magic breath of song!

She blushes! Ah, reluctant maid,
Love's *drapeau rouge* the truth has told!
O'er girlhood's yielding barricade
Floats the great Leveller's crimson fold!

Come to my arms! — love heeds not years;
No frost the bud of passion knows.
Ha! what is this my frenzy hears?
A voice behind me uttered, — Rose!

Sweet was her smile, — but not for me;
Alas! when woman looks *too* kind,
Just turn your foolish head and see, —
Some youth is walking close behind!

CONTENTMENT

"Man wants but little here below"

Little I ask; my wants are few;
I only wish a hut of stone,
(A *very plain* brown stone will do,)
That I may call my own; —
And close at hand is such a one,
In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
Three courses are as good as ten; —
If Nature can subsist on three,
Thank Heaven for three. Amen!
I always thought cold victual nice; —
My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.

I care not much for gold or land; —
Give me a mortgage here and there, —
Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,
Or trifling railroad share, —
I only ask that Fortune send
A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,
And titles are but empty names;
I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo, —
But only near St. James;
I'm very sure I should not care
To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 't is a sin
To care for such unfruitful things; —
One good-sized diamond in a pin, —
Some, *not so large*, in rings, —
A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
Will do for me; — I laugh at show.

My dame should dress in cheap attire;
(Good, heavy silks are never dear;) —
I own perhaps I *might* desire
Some shawls of true Cashmere, —
Some marrowy crapes of China silk,
Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
So fast that folks must stop and stare;
An easy gait — two, forty-five —
Suits me; I do not care; —
Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,
Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
Titians and Raphaels three or four, —
I love so much their style and tone,
One Turner, and no more,
(A landscape, — foreground golden dirt, —
The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

Of books but few, — some fifty score
For daily use, and bound for wear;
The rest upon an upper floor; —
Some *little* luxury *there*

Of red morocco's gilded gleam
And vellum rich as country cream

Busts, cameos, gems, — such things as these,
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride; —
One Stradivarius, I confess,
Two Meerschaums, I would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks I will not learn,
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool; —
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
But *all* must be of buhl?
Give grasping pomp its double share, —
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch;
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
I shall not miss them *much*, —
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content!

ÆSTIVATION

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM, BY MY LATE LATIN TUTOR

In candent ire the solar splendor flames;
The foles, languescent, pend from arid rames;
His humid front the cive, anheling, wipes,
And dreams of erring on ventiferous ripes.

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the crescent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine!

To me, alas! no verdurous visions come,
Save yon exiguous pool's conferva-scum, —
No concave vast repeats the tender hue
That laves my milk-jug with celestial blue!

Me wretched! Let me curr to quercine shades!
Effund your albid hausts, lactiferous maids!
Oh, might I vole to some umbrageous clump, —
Depart, — be off, — excede, — evade, — erump!

THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE

OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY"

A LOGICAL STORY

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then, of a sudden, it — ah, but stay,
I 'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, —
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive, —

Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot, —
In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking still,
Find it somewhere you must and will, —
Above or below, or within or without, —
And that 's the reason, beyond a doubt,
That a chaise *breaks down*, but does n't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore (as Deacons do,
With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*")
He would build one shay to beat the taown
'n' the keounty 'n' all the kentry raoun';
It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
"Fur," said the Deacon, " 't 's mighty plain
Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
Is only jest
T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
Where he could find the strongest oak,
That could n't be split nor bent nor broke, —

That was for spokes and floor and sills;
He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
But lasts like iron for things like these;
The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum,"—
Last of its timber, — they could n't sell 'em,
Never an axe had seen their chips,
And the wedges flew from between their lips,
Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
Steel of the finest, bright and blue;
Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
Found in the pit when the tanner died.
That was the way he "put her through."
"There!" said the Deacon, "naow she 'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
She was a wonder, and nothing less!
Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
Children and grandchildren — where were they?
But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
As fresh as on Lisbon-earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; — it came and found
The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
Eighteen hundred increased by ten; —
"Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —

Running as usual; much the same.
Thirty and forty at last arrive,
And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.

Little of all we value here
Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
Without both feeling and looking queer.
In fact, there 's nothing that keeps its youth,
So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
(This is a moral that runs at large;
Take it. — You 're welcome. — No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the Earthquake-day,—
There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
A general flavor of mild decay,
But nothing local, as one may say.
There could n't be, — for the Deacon's art
Had made it so like in every part
That there was n't a chance for one to start.
For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
And the panels just as strong as the floor,
And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
In another hour it will be *worn out!*

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,

Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson. — Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text, —
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the — Moses — was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
First a shiver, and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill,—
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock,—
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you 're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, —
All at once, and nothing first, —
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That 's all I say.

PARSON TURELL'S LEGACY

OR, THE PRESIDENT'S OLD ARM-CHAIR

A MATHEMATICAL STORY

FACTS respecting an old arm-chair.
At Cambridge. Is kept in the College there.
Seems but little the worse for wear.
That 's remarkable when I say

It was old in President Holyoke's day.
(One of his boys, perhaps you know,
Died, *at one hundred*, years ago.)
He took lodgings for rain or shine
Under green bed-clothes in '69.

Know old Cambridge? Hope you do.—
Born there? Don't say so! I was, too.
(Born in a house with a gambrel-roof,—
Standing still, if you must have proof.—
"Gambrel? — Gambrel?" — Let me beg
You 'll look at a horse's hinder leg,—
First great angle above the hoof,—
That 's the gambrel; hence gambrel-roof.)
Nicest place that ever was seen,—
Colleges red and Common green,
Sidewalks brownish with trees between.
Sweetest spot beneath the skies
When the canker-worms don't rise,—
When the dust, that sometimes flies
Into your mouth and ears and eyes,
In a quiet slumber lies,
Not in the shape of unbaked pies
Such as barefoot children prize.

A kind of harbor it seems to be,
Facing the flow of a boundless sea.
Rows of gray old Tutors stand
Ranged like rocks above the sand;
Rolling beneath them, soft and green,
Breaks the tide of bright sixteen,—
One wave, two waves, three waves, four,—
Sliding up the sparkling floor:

Then it ebbs to flow no more,
Wandering off from shore to shore
With its freight of golden ore!
Pleasant place for boys to play; —
Better keep your girls away;
Hearts get rolled as pebbles do
Which countless fingering waves pursue,
And every classic beach is strown
With heart-shaped pebbles of blood-red stone.

But this is neither here nor there;
I 'm talking about an old arm-chair.
You 've heard, no doubt, of PARSON TURELL?
Over at Medford he used to dwell;
Married one of the Mathers' folk;
Got with his wife a chair of oak, —
Funny old chair with seat like wedge,
Sharp behind and broad front edge, —
One of the oddest of human things,
Turned all over with knobs and rings, —
But heavy, and wide, and deep, and grand, —
Fit for the worthies of the land, —
Chief Justice Sewall a cause to try in,
Or Cotton Mather to sit — and lie — in.
Parson Turell bequeathed the same
To a certain student, — SMITH by name;
These were the terms, as we are told:
"Saide Smith saide Chaire to have and holde;
When he doth graduate, then to passe
To ye oldest Youth in ye Senior Classe.
On payment of " — (naming a certain sum) —
"By him to whom ye Chaire shall come;

He to ye oldest Senior next,
And soe forever," — (thus runs the text,) —
"But one Crown lesse then he gave to claime,
That being his Debte for use of same."

Smith transferred it to one of the BROWNS,
And took his money, — five silver crowns.
Brown delivered it up to MOORE,
Who paid, it is plain, not five, but four.
Moore made over the chair to LEE,
Who gave him crowns of silver three.
Lee conveyed it unto DREW,
And now the payment, of course, was two.
Drew gave up the chair to DUNN, —
All he got, as you see, was one.
Dunn released the chair to HALL,
And got by the bargain no crown at all.
And now it passed to a second BROWN,
Who took it and likewise *claimed a crown*.
When *Brown* conveyed it unto WARE,
Having had one crown, to make it fair,
He paid him two crowns to take the chair;
And *Ware*, being honest, (as all Wares be,)
He paid one POTTER, who took it, three.
Four got ROBINSON; five got DIX;
JOHNSON *primus* demanded six;
And so the sum kept gathering still
Till after the battle of Bunker's Hill.

When paper money became so cheap,
Folks would n't count it, but said "a heap,"
A certain RICHARDS, — the books declare, —
(A. M. in '90? I 've looked with care

Through the Triennial, — *name not there,*) —
This person, Richards, was offered then
Eightscore pounds, but would have ten;
Nine, I think, was the sum he took, —
Not quite certain, — but see the book.
By and by the wars were still,
But nothing had altered the Parson's will.
The old arm-chair was solid yet,
But saddled with such a monstrous debt!
Things grew quite too bad to bear,
Paying such sums to get rid of the chair!
But dead men's fingers hold awful tight,
And there was the will in black and white,
Plain enough for a child to spell.
What should be done no man could tell,
For the chair was a kind of nightmare curse,
And every season but made it worse.

As a last resort, to clear the doubt,
They got old GOVERNOR HANCOCK out.
The Governor came with his Lighthorse Troop
And his mounted truckmen, all cock-a-hoop;
Halberds glittered and colors flew,
French horns whinnied and trumpets blew,
The yellow fifes whistled between their teeth,
And the bumble-bee bass-drums boomed beneath;
So he rode with all his band,
Till the President met him, cap in hand.
The Governor "hefted" the crowns, and said, —
"A will is a will, and the Parson 's dead."
The Governor hefted the crowns. Said he, —
"There is your p'int. And here 's my fee.

These are the terms you must fulfil, —
On such conditions I BREAK THE WILL!"
The Governor mentioned what these should be.
(Just wait a minute and then you 'll see.)
The President prayed. Then all was still,
And the Governor rose and BROKE THE WILL!
"About those conditions?" Well, now you go
And do as I tell you, and then you 'll know.
Once a year, on Commencement day,
If you 'll only take the pains to stay,
You 'll see the President in the CHAIR,
Likewise the Governor sitting there.
The President rises; both old and young
May hear his speech in a foreign tongue,
The meaning whereof, as lawyers swear,
Is this: Can I keep this old arm-chair?
And then his Excellency bows,
As much as to say that he allows.
The Vice-Gub. next is called by name;
He bows like t' other, which means the same.
And all the officers round 'em bow,
As much as to say that *they* allow.
And a lot of parchments about the chair
Are handed to witnesses then and there,
And then the lawyers hold it clear
That the chair is safe for another year.

God bless you, Gentlemen! Learn to give
Money to colleges while you live.
Don't be silly and think you 'll try
To bother the colleges, when you die,

With codicil this, and codicil that,
That Knowledge may starve while Law grows fat;
For there never was pitcher that would n't spill,
And there 's always a flaw in a donkey's will!

ODE FOR A SOCIAL MEETING

WITH SLIGHT ALTERATIONS BY A TEETOTALER

COME! fill a fresh bumper, for why should we go
While the logwood ~~nectar~~ still reddens our cups as they flow?
Pour out the decoction ~~rich juices~~ still bright with the sun,
Till o'er the brimmed crystal the dye-stuff ~~rubies~~ shall run.

The half-ripened apples ~~purple-globed clusters~~ their life-dews have bled;
How sweet is the taste ~~breath~~ of the sugar of lead ~~fragrance they shed!~~
For summer's rank poisons ~~last roses~~ lie hid in the *wines!!!* ~~wines~~
That were garnered by stable-boys smoking ~~maidens who laughed~~
long-nines ~~thro' the vines.~~

Then a scowl ~~smile,~~ and a howl ~~glass,~~ and a scoff ~~toast,~~ and a sneer ~~cheer,~~
For all the strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and beer! ~~good wine, and we 've some of it here!~~
In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,
Down, down with the tyrant that masters us all! ~~Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!~~

POEMS FROM THE PROFESSOR AT THE BREAKFAST-TABLE

1858–1859

UNDER THE VIOLETS

Her hands are cold; her face is white;
No more her pulses come and go;
Her eyes are shut to life and light; —
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
To plead for tears with alien eyes;
A slender cross of wood alone
Shall say, that here a maiden lies
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And gray old trees of hugest limb
Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
That drinks the greenness from the ground,
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
And through their leaves the robins call,

And, ripening in the autumn sun,
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
Its matins from the branches high,
And every minstrel-voice of Spring,
That trills beneath the April sky,
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
The crickets, sliding through the grass,
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.
So may the soul that warmed it rise!

If any, born of kindlier blood,
Should ask, What maiden lies below?
Say only this: A tender bud,
That tried to blossom in the snow,
Lies withered where the violets blow.

HYMN OF TRUST

O Love Divine, that stooped to share
  Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care,
  We smile at pain while Thou art near!

Though long the weary way we tread,
  And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
  Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near!

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
  And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
  Shall softly tell us, Thou art near!

On Thee we fling our burdening woe,
  O Love Divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
  Living and dying, Thou art near!

A SUN-DAY HYMN

Lord of all being! throned afar,
  Thy glory flames from sun and star;
Centre and soul of every sphere,
  Yet to each loving heart how near!

Sun of our life, thy quickening ray
  Sheds on our path the glow of day;

Star of our hope, thy softened light
Cheers the long watches of the night.

Our midnight is thy smile withdrawn;
Our noontide is thy gracious dawn;
Our rainbow arch thy mercy's sign;
All, save the clouds of sin, are thine!

Lord of all life, below, above,
Whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before thy ever-blazing throne
We ask no lustre of our own.

Grant us thy truth to make us free,
And kindling hearts that burn for thee,
Till all thy living altars claim
One holy light, one heavenly flame!

THE CROOKED FOOTPATH

Ah, here it is! the sliding rail
That marks the old remembered spot, —
The gap that struck our school-boy trail, —
The crooked path across the lot.

It left the road by school and church,
A pencilled shadow, nothing more,
That parted from the silver-birch
And ended at the farm-house door.

No line or compass traced its plan;
With frequent bends to left or right,

In aimless, wayward curves it ran,
  But always kept the door in sight.

The gabled porch, with woodbine green, —
  The broken millstone at the sill, —
Though many a rood might stretch between,
  The truant child could see them still.

No rocks across the pathway lie, —
  No fallen trunk is o'er it thrown, —
And yet it winds, we know not why,
  And turns as if for tree or stone.

Perhaps some lover trod the way
  With shaking knees and leaping heart, —
And so it often runs astray
  With sinuous sweep or sudden start.

Or one, perchance, with clouded brain
  From some unholy banquet reeled, —
And since, our devious steps maintain
  His track across the trodden field.

Nay, deem not thus, — no earthborn will
  Could ever trace a faultless line;
Our truest steps are human still, —
  To walk unswerving were divine!

Truants from love, we dream of wrath; —
  Oh, rather let us trust the more!
Through all the wanderings of the path,
  We still can see our Father's door!

IRIS, HER BOOK

I PRAY thee by the soul of her that bore thee,
By thine own sister's spirit I implore thee,
Deal gently with the leaves that lie before thee!

For Iris had no mother to infold her,
Nor ever leaned upon a sister's shoulder,
Telling the twilight thoughts that Nature told her.

She had not learned the mystery of awaking
Those chorded keys that soothe a sorrow's aching,
Giving the dumb heart voice, that else were breaking.

Yet lived, wrought, suffered. Lo, the pictured token!
Why should her fleeting day-dreams fade unspoken,
Like daffodils that die with sheaths unbroken?

She knew not love, yet lived in maiden fancies, —
Walked simply clad, a queen of high romances,
And talked strange tongues with angels in her trances.

Twin-souled she seemed, a twofold nature wearing:
Sometimes a flashing falcon in her daring,
Then a poor mateless dove that droops despairing.

Questioning all things: Why her Lord had sent her?

What were these torturing gifts, and wherefore lent her?
Scornful as spirit fallen, its own tormentor.

And then all tears and anguish: Queen of Heaven,
Sweet Saints, and Thou by mortal sorrows riven,
Save me! Oh, save me! Shall I die forgiven?

And then — Ah, God! But nay, it little matters:
Look at the wasted seeds that autumn scatters,
The myriad germs that Nature shapes and shatters!

If she had — Well! She longed, and knew not wherefore.
Had the world nothing she might live to care for?
No second self to say her evening prayer for?

She knew the marble shapes that set men dreaming,
Yet with her shoulders bare and tresses streaming
Showed not unlovely to her simple seeming.

Vain? Let it be so! Nature was her teacher.
What if a lonely and unsistered creature
Loved her own harmless gift of pleasing feature,

Saying, unsaddened, — This shall soon be faded,
And double-hued the shining tresses braided,
And all the sunlight of the morning shaded?

This her poor book is full of saddest follies,
Of tearful smiles and laughing melancholies,
With summer roses twined and wintry hollies.

In the strange crossing of uncertain chances,
Somewhere, beneath some maiden's tear-dimmed
glances
May fall her little book of dreams and fancies.

Sweet sister! Iris, who shall never name thee,
Trembling for fear her open heart may shame thee,
Speaks from this vision-haunted page to claim thee.

Spare her, I pray thee! If the maid is sleeping,
Peace with her! she has had her hour of weeping.
No more! She leaves her memory in thy keeping.

ROBINSON OF LEYDEN

He sleeps not here; in hope and prayer
His wandering flock had gone before,
But he, the shepherd, might not share
Their sorrows on the wintry shore.

Before the Speedwell's anchor swung,
Ere yet the Mayflower's sail was spread,
While round his feet the Pilgrims clung,
The pastor spake, and thus he said: —

"Men, brethren, sisters, children dear!
God calls you hence from over sea;
Ye may not build by Haerlem Meer,
Nor yet along the Zuyder-Zee.

"Ye go to bear the saving word
To tribes unnamed and shores untrod;
Heed well the lessons ye have heard
From those old teachers taught of God.

"Yet think not unto them was lent
All light for all the coming days,
And Heaven's eternal wisdom spent
In making straight the ancient ways;

"The living fountain overflows
For every flock, for every lamb,
Nor heeds, though angry creeds oppose
With Luther's dike or Calvin's dam."

He spake; with lingering, long embrace,
With tears of love and partings fond,
They floated down the creeping Maas,
Along the isle of Ysselmond.

They passed the frowning towers of Briel,
The "Hook of Holland's" shelf of sand,
And grated soon with lifting keel
The sullen shores of Fatherland.

No home for these! — too well they knew
The mitred king behind the throne; —
The sails were set, the pennons flew,
And westward ho! for worlds unknown.

And these were they who gave us birth,
The Pilgrims of the sunset wave,

Who won for us this virgin earth,
And freedom with the soil they gave.

The pastor slumbers by the Rhine, —
In alien earth the exiles lie, —
Their nameless graves our holiest shrine,
His words our noblest battle-cry!

Still cry them, and the world shall hear,
Ye dwellers by the storm-swept sea!
Ye *have* not built by Haerlem Meer,
Nor on the land-locked Zuyder-Zee!

ST. ANTHONY THE REFORMER

HIS TEMPTATION

No fear lest praise should make us proud!
We know how cheaply that is won;
The idle homage of the crowd
Is proof of tasks as idly done.

A surface-smile may pay the toil
That follows still the conquering Right,
With soft, white hands to dress the spoil
That sun-browned valor clutched in fight.

Sing the sweet song of other days,
Serenely placid, safely true,
And o'er the present's parching ways
The verse distils like evening dew.

But speak in words of living power, —
They fall like drops of scalding rain
That plashed before the burning shower
Swept o'er the cities of the plain!

Then scowling Hate turns deadly pale, —
Then Passion's half-coiled adders spring,
And, smitten through their leprous mail,
Strike right and left in hope to sting.

If thou, unmoved by poisoning wrath,
Thy feet on earth, thy heart above,
Canst walk in peace thy kingly path,
Unchanged in trust, unchilled in love, —

Too kind for bitter words to grieve,
Too firm for clamor to dismay,
When Faith forbids thee to believe,
And Meekness calls to disobey, —

Ah, then beware of mortal pride!
The smiling pride that calmly scorns
Those foolish fingers, crimson dyed
In laboring on thy crown of thorns!

THE OPENING OF THE PIANO

In the little southern parlor of the house you may have seen
With the gambrel-roof, and the gable looking westward to the green,

At the side toward the sunset, with the window on its right,
Stood the London-made piano I am dreaming of to-night!

Ah me! how I remember the evening when it came!
What a cry of eager voices, what a group of cheeks in flame,
When the wondrous box was opened that had come from over seas,
With its smell of mastic-varnish and its flash of ivory keys!

Then the children all grew fretful in the restlessness of joy,
For the boy would push his sister, and the sister crowd the boy,
Till the father asked for quiet in his grave paternal way,
But the mother hushed the tumult with the words, "Now, Mary, play."

For the dear soul knew that music was a very sovereign balm;
She had sprinkled it over Sorrow and seen its brow grow calm,
In the days of slender harpsichords with tapping tinkling quills,
Or carolling to her spinet with its thin metallic thrills.

So Mary, the household minstrel, who always
loved to please,
Sat down to the new "Clementi," and struck the
glittering keys.
Hushed were the children's voices, and every eye
grew dim,
As, floating from lip and finger, arose the "Ves-
per Hymn."

Catharine, child of a neighbor, curly and rosy-red,
(Wedded since, and a widow, — something like ten
years dead,)
Hearing a gush of music such as none before,
Steals from her mother's chamber and peeps at the
open door.

Just as the "Jubilate" in threaded whisper dies,
"Open it! open it, lady!" the little maiden cries,
(For she thought 't was a singing creature caged in
a box she heard,)
"Open it! open it, lady! and let me see the
bird!"

MIDSUMMER

HERE! sweep these foolish leaves away,
I will not crush my brains to-day!
Look! are the southern curtains drawn?
Fetch me a fan, and so begone!

Not that, — the palm-tree's rustling leaf
Brought from a parching coral-reef!

Its breath is heated; — I would swing
The broad gray plumes, — the eagle's wing.

I hate these roses' feverish blood! —
Pluck me a half-blown lily-bud,
A long-stemmed lily from the lake,
Cold as a coiling water-snake.

Rain me sweet odors on the air,
And wheel me up my Indian chair,
And spread some book not overwise
Flat out before my sleepy eyes.

Who knows it not, — this dead recoil
Of weary fibres stretched with toil, —
The pulse that flutters faint and low
When Summer's seething breezes blow!

O Nature! bare thy loving breast,
And give thy child one hour of rest, —
One little hour to lie unseen
Beneath thy scarf of leafy green!

So, curtained by a singing pine,
Its murmuring voice shall blend with mine,
Till, lost in dreams, my faltering lay
In sweeter music dies away.

DE SAUTY

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE

The first messages received through the submarine cable were sent by an electrical expert, a mysterious personage who signed himself De Sauty.

Professor — *Blue-Nose*

PROFESSOR

TELL me, O Provincial! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal!
Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,
Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,
Holding talk with nations?

Is there a De Sauty ambulant on Tellus,
Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormient in nightcap,
Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature
Three times daily patent?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal?
Or is he a *mythus*, — ancient word for "humbug," —
Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed
Romulus and Remus?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty?
Or a living product of galvanic action,
Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse's flint-solution?
Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal!

BLUE-NOSE

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,
Much-conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!
Pretermit thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward me,
Thou shall hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,
At the polar focus of the wire electric
Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:
Called himself "De Sauty."

As the small opossum held in pouch maternal
Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,
So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,
Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced stranger, —
Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy, —
And from time to time, in sharp articulation,
Said, "*All right!* De Sauty."

From the lonely station passed the utterance, spreading
Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves of steeples,

Till the land was filled with loud reverberations
Of "*All right!* De Sauty."

When the current slackened, drooped the mystic stranger, —
Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker, —
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odor
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,
Till one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chlor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang. (?)
Alumin. (?) Cuprum, (?)
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!
Give us a new cable, then again we 'll hear him
Cry, "*All right!* De Sauty."

NOTES

Page 7. *There stand the Goblet and the Sun.*

The Goblet and the Sun (Vas-Sol), sculptured on a free-stone slab supported by five pillars, are the only designation of the family tomb of the Vassalls.

Page 45. *The leaflets gathered at your side.*

See "The Cambridge Churchyard," on page 5 of this volume.

Page 48. *Thus mocked the spoilers with his school-boy scorn.*

See "Old Ironsides," on page 1 of this volume.

Page 51. *On other shores, above their mouldering towns.*

Daniel Webster quoted several of the verses which follow, in his address at the laying of the corner-stone of the addition to the Capitol at Washington, July 4, 1851.

Page 58. *Thou calm, chaste scholar.*

Charles Chauncy Emerson; died May 9, 1836.

Page 58. *And thou, dear friend, whom Science still deplores.*

James Jackson, Jr., M. D.; died March 28, 1834.

Page 65. THE STEAMBOAT.

Mr. Emerson has quoted some lines from this poem, but somewhat disguised as he recalled them. It is never safe to quote poetry without referring to the original.

Page 115. *Hark! The sweet bells renew their welcome sound.*

The churches referred to in the lines which follow are, —

1. King's Chapel, the foundation of which was laid by Governor Shirley in 1749.

2. Brattle Street Church, consecrated in 1773. The completion of this edifice, the design of which included a spire, was prevented by the troubles of the Revolution, and its

plain, square tower presented nothing more attractive than a massive simplicity. In the front of this tower, till the church was demolished in 1872, there was to be seen, half imbedded in the brick-work, a cannon-ball, which was thrown from the American fortifications at Cambridge, during the bombardment of the city, then occupied by the British troops.

3. The Old South, first occupied for public worship in 1730.

4. Park Street Church, built in 1809, the tall white steeple of which is the most conspicuous of all the Boston spires.

5. Christ Church, opened for public worship in 1723, and containing a set of eight bells, long the only chime in Boston.

Page 281. INTERNATIONAL ODE.

This ode was sung in unison by twelve hundred children of the public schools, to the air of "God save the Queen," at the visit of the Prince of Wales to Boston, October 18, 1860.

Pages 303 and 304. THE BOYS.

The members of the Harvard College class of 1829 referred to in this poem are: "Doctor," Francis Thomas; "Judge," G. T. Bigelow, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Massachusetts; "Speaker," Hon. Francis B. Crowninshield, Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives; "Mr. Mayor," G. W. Richardson, of Worcester, Mass.; "Member of Congress," Hon. George T. Davis; "Reverend," James Freeman Clarke; "boy with the grave mathematical look," Benjamin Peirce; "boy with a three-decker brain," Judge Benjamin R. Curtis, of the Supreme Court of the United States; "nice youngster of excellent pith," S. F. Smith, author of "My Country, 't is of Thee."

Page 367. *That lovely, bright-eyed boy.*

William Sturgis.

Page 368. *Who faced the storm so long.*

Francis B. Crowninshield.

Page 368. *Our many-featured friend.*

George T. Davis.

Page 396. *The close-clinging dulcamara.*

The "bitter-sweet" of New England is the *Celastrus scandens*, "bourreau des arbres" of the Canadian French.

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